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The Baron Von Boots.

CAKES and ALE.

By

Douglas Jerrold

Vol 2.

How & Parsons 132 Fleet Street
1842

CAKES AND ALE.

BY

DOUGLAS JERROLD.

OF TOOTHSOME CAKES HE MADE 'EM CHEER,
AND EKE OF HUMMING ALE;
AND BADE 'EM SIT AND LEND AN EAR
TO MANY A PASSING TALE. OLD BALLAD.

VOLUME II.

LONDON:
HOW AND PARSONS,
FLEET STREET.

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THE LIVES OF

BROWN, JONES, AND ROBINSON.

"SMITH! BROWN! JONES! and ROBINSON!" We can see the eyes of the reader sparkle as they meet the names of his schoolboy friends. And now, they melt, and the reader lays his hand upon his pensive heart, sighing at the untimely fate of "Smith," who "was drowned." The reader mourns for the dead—for the red-cheeked, curly-headed little Smith, prodigal of apples when apples fell to his lot—cunning at taw—agile at leap-frog—knowing at kite: for Smith who, like many a Chancellor of the Exchequer, had surmounted multiplication only to sink; for Smith who, like many philosophers and metaphysicians sounded the lowest depths of things only to leave the world in ignorance of his discoveries.

It was our first purpose to make no further allusion to the spelling-book tragedy than that already set down; in our simplicity we thought the mere names, Brown, Jones, and Robinson, would be all-sufficient to awaken a full recollection of their perils past—of the punishment they suffered—of the immortal reasons of the schoolmaster for the chastisement he weepingly bestowed.

"We will trust," said we to our prosaic friend Wagstaff—"we will trust to the recollections of the world," and we looked about us proudly.

"Dearest ——," said Wagstaff, "do no such thing. No—no; give your text. Give the whole story '*Of the Boys that went into the Water instead of being at School or at Home*,' and then, whatever you may have to say upon the matter—though

I believe Mr. Daniel Fenning has said all that can be said—state briefly afterwards. But, answer me, ——, what can you purpose by your present whim?"

"Whim, Mr. Wagstaff? We feel that we are about to become a great moral teacher. We have documents, yes, Sir, documents, containing the future lives of Brown, Jones, and Robinson, which will enable us to shew the paramount value and influence of early impressions. When at school, Mr. Wagstaff, were you ever whipped?"

"I never was at school, Mr. ——," and Wagstaff seemed to rise a good inch higher. "But what has whipping to do with early impressions?"

"You shall find, if you will patiently listen to the lives of Brown, Jones, and Robinson. But first I will set on the head of my story—where it will glitter like a coronet—a passage from Mr. Fenning. Mark the simple beauty of—

"Lesson I.—There were several boys that used to go into the water instead of being at school, and they sometimes staid so long after school time, that they used to frighten their parents very much; and though they were told of it time after time, yet they *would frequently go to wash themselves!* One day four of them, *Smith*, *Brown*, *Jones*, and *Robinson*, took it into their heads to play the truant, and go into the water. They had not been in long before *Smith* was drowned! *Brown's* father followed him, and lashed him heartily while he was naked; and *Jones* and *Robinson* ran home half-dressed, which plainly told where they had been. However, they were both sent to bed *without any supper*, and told very plainly that they should be well corrected at school next day!"

We pass the "second lesson," as it contains little worthy of thought, save the benevolent promise of the schoolmaster, who, as they say in the playbills, "in the most handsome manner" pledges himself to flog the delinquents; a pledge which he redeems in a spirit of punctuality more than satisfactory to the sufferers. We now come to "Lesson III.," which shews "*How Brown, Jones, and Robinson were served.*"

"Next day, *Brown*, *Jones*, and *Robinson* were sent to school, and in a short time were called up to their master; and he first began with *Brown*.—Pray, young gentleman, said he, what is the reason you go into the water without the consent of your parents, and even when you should be at school? I won't do so any more, said Brown. *That is nothing at all*, replied the master; *I cannot trust you*. Pray can you swim? No, Sir. *Not swim, do you say?* Why, you might have been drowned as well as *Smith*. Take him up, said the master. So he was taken up, and well whipped.

"Well, said he to *Jones*, can you swim? A little, Sir. A *little!* said the master; *why, you were in more danger than Brown*, and might have been drowned if you had ventured much farther. Take him up, said he.

"Now, Robinson could swim very well, and thought, as *Brown* and *Jones* were whipped because they could not swim, that he should escape. Well, *Robinson*, said the master, can you swim? Yes, Sir, said he (very boldly), anywhere over the river. You can swim, you say? Yes, Sir. Then pray, Sir, if you can swim so well, what business had you in the water, when you should have been at school? *You didn't want to learn to swim, you say?* it is plain then you go in for idleness' sake. Take him up, take him up, said he. So they were all *severely corrected* for their disobedience and folly!"

Brown, Jones, and Robinson were whipped, but Smith was beyond the vengeance of the schoolmaster. Smith might blandly smile at—

"The silvery stems of delicate birch-trees."

He was secure from the strong arm, and the stronger reason of the pedagogue. His future days were not like the days of his surviving companions, doomed to feel the influence of "early impressions." Little Smith was borne to the church-yard by boys and girls in comely white; flowers grew on his grave, and in due time a cherub head, considered to be a

likeness of the deceased, wept enormous tears—a touching type of his watery fate—above him. The mortal part of Smith was assuredly laid in dust; but, to this day, his ghost is said to be in many waters. "I 'm sure," exclaimed a little fellow of six years' old, gazing on a brook with solemn eye, "I 'm sure that 's the pond where Smith was drowned!" How many an urchin, with a vague sense of curious awe, looks for Smith in puddles—the "Proteus rising from the sea," of childish apprehension!

The reader cannot have failed to mark the wisdom of the inexorable schoolmaster, who scourges Brown because he "cannot swim," and who notwithstanding "goes into the water." Brown should have first learned to swim on dry land, ere he ventured to wet himself. The life of the man Brown shewed that the schoolboy was fully impressed with the golden lesson of the teacher; that to the end of his days he had never forgotten the wise maxims of his master. It is the accidents befalling the man, Brown, we are about to narrate; and thereby, as we fondly hope, to display a vivid illustration of the effect of early impressions. The pearls let fall by the schoolmaster, Brown gathered up, and wore as amulets through life.

I. Brown, who "couldn't swim."

CHAPTER I.

Young Brown inherited from his father the equivocal sum of a thousand pounds. He had better inherited nothing; for, in the present state of society, we hold a thousand pounds to be not merely a useless, but a mischievous, sum: it is not a negative good, but a positive evil. What is to be done with a thousand pounds? Put it in the funds, says Quiet, and philosophise upon thirty pounds a-year! There are exquisite essays written to prove the sufficiency of thirty pounds a-year, allowing at least five shillings per quarter for the conversion of the Jews; essays, in which the expenses of a pauper gentleman

are so nicely calculated that it must be his own wilful eccentricity, if, at the end of the year, he either owes a shilling or has one. We happen to be honoured with the short acquaintance of the author of some of these *libretti*. He had thrice been shut up in the Fleet on an income of three hundred per annum, and was consequently enabled to preach on the competence of thirty pounds a-year. It was during his third visit to the gaol that we had some interesting talk with him. He was lamenting the extravagance of the present generation; and passing his right hand under his velvet cap, and turning his pensive and eloquent eye upwards, asked us if we had ever read his book? Of course we had. We, however, ventured to question the correctness of its conclusions; in a word, we were hardy enough to express our doubts of the possibility of existing "as a gentleman"—for such were the author's premises—on thirty pounds a-year. "Look at Higginbottom," said we, "he has followed your system to a chop, and yet Higginbottom is in debt." "Pardon me," quickly returned the author, "I grant his obedience so far as the chop goes, but there were three days in the year that Higginbottom would not take his chop without pickles. Now, my system is so philosophically arranged as not to admit of even a single onion. Depend upon it, my dear Sir, with a wise economy, a man may always on thirty pounds a-year obtain his chop; the ruin lies in the pickles." We were about to dispute the point, when the temperate author began to swear at a boy who entered with a bottle of port. "And where, you scoundrel," cried the author of a treatise on the sufficiency of thirty pounds per year, "where, you miscreant, are the olives? What! forgot them? Vagabond! to suppose I could drink port without olives! Vanish! Stop! Don't make the blunder you made before: mind—*French* olives!"

We are satisfied in our belief of the worse than worthlessness of a single thousand pounds. Laid out at interest, it may bring daily bread; but what is life, without its pickles? Such

was the wise conviction of young Brown, condemned to a thousand pounds. Brown had, at five-and-twenty, done nothing; a circumstance which supplied him with an inducement to go on as he had begun. When at school, he "couldn't swim," and he had been soundly birched for venturing where only he could learn. Throughout his life it seemed that the argument of the schoolmaster exercised a subtle power over the mind of the scholar. He was ignorant, and how vain the endeavour to be wise!

Brown, though a fervent admirer of the beautiful sex, had never ventured to intrust the secret of that admiration to any person the most likely to be interested with it. At one-and-twenty, he was moderately in love with Maria, the daughter of the village attorney; Maria Writly, whose honoured father would have been but too happy to assign his seventh child to the protection of our hero. Brown, however, was conscious of his inexperience: he never had made love, and it was so awkward to begin to learn. He was sure that his passion became stronger and stronger; he thought, too, that the young lady saw it, and smiled benignantly upon its growth; still, he never had spoken to any woman upon a subject generally so offensive to the sex, and, perhaps, it was not yet time for him to open his mouth.

"Bless you, it's nothing," said Jack Simmons, clerk to old Writly. "Take my word for it," said Jack one day to Brown, "it's nothing!"

We fear our lady readers will be somewhat scandalised when they learn that what Jack Simmons proclaimed to be nothing, was no other than that most important passage in the life of every biped, whether the active or the passive party—a declaration of love. Nothing!

"Well, it may be," said Brown, "very likely: but then, Jack, the fact is, I—if I must speak—I never did make an offer."

"I'll defy Solomon," replied Jack, "to find any young

gentleman a better reason for beginning at the very earliest opportunity."

Brown thrust his fingers through his hair, and looking upon the ground, and then into the sky, and then turning his head, and staring in the face of Jack Simmons, said, in a very serious voice, "Jack, I never did it." Jacked laughed.

Time passed on, and Brown remained silent, because he had been silent; every hour and every day adding, in his opinion, a new reason for his taciturnity. Jack Simmons ceased to advise where his advice bore no fruit, and the early friends became mere acquaintance. Jack was one of those enviable, prosperous spirits, who look upon the very best things of this world as things made for themselves, and hence when fortune offers her goods, taking them with scarcely a flushing of the face or a trembling of the nerves, to betray a delicious feeling of surprise. Jack would have taken a coronet from the hand of the goddess, and clapping it upon his head, as if it were no more than a new beaver, would have walked airily away. While a humble, fearing spirit would have offered thanks for a hedge-side crab, Jack Simmons would have helped himself to a pine at five guineas, whistling as he cut it. Hence, Jack Simmons had many pines, when other Jacks were gaping for the crudest little apple!

Two months had flown since the meeting of Brown and Jack, when Jack had, in the opinion of Brown, sacrilegiously avowed a declaration of love to be "nothing." It was a beautiful morning in June, and Brown—with thoughts of Maria Writly in his heart and head, and fishing-tackle in his hand—crossed the paternal threshold. Now he thought of Maria, and now of trout; now of his long-deferred declaration, and now of his bait. With the mixed feelings of a lover and an angler, though they may be thought the same, Brown plodded onward. He passed the school: his former master—his benefactor—was gone: a stranger flogged another generation, and, let us hope, with justice, strength, and wisdom equal to the

gifts of his predecessor. Brown turned the corner of a lane; an action that, although lost upon the reader, denoted the two possessing passions of the pedestrian: the lane led to the stream wherein Brown hoped to catch his fish, and half-way up the lane stood the cottage of Jeffrey Writly, attorney-at-law.

We know not whether the reader has felt a surprise that has often smote us in our many wanderings through little country towns. If so, we could wish to exchange opinions on the matter. Why is it that the house of the lawyer and the house of the apothecary are nine times out of ten at some distance from the crowds of houses composing the town? Why do they stand—if we may use the term—pushed away from the sociality of neighbours? We believe there are certain statutes which confine the workers in unhealthy and noisome trades to the outskirts of a city; but what—we ask it of the curious—what principle *can* operate to the banishment of the lawyer and the apothecary? "We pause for a reply."

And Brown "paused," but for what, we will leave the imaginative reader to guess. He stood, his rod upon the ground, looking at the chamber window of Maria Writly, his unaccosted mistress!

"Now might I do it, pat, now he is praying,"

cries the vaccillating Hamlet stumbling on the kneeling Claudius. Now, thought Brown, as he gazed upon the lattice, now could I tell my love, although I never did before. Brown stood and looked.

Oh, reader! if you have ever been in love—and if you have not, you are worse than any beast of years of discretion—and if, having been in love, you have ever stood and looked at the lattice of your sleeping mistress, have you not felt your heart drawn up—up—up to the casement? Has not the house lain in the sweet moonlight, or basked in the morning sun like a living thing? That within it you have loved has given a sense,

a vitality, to the outward walls: you could with reverent, pilgrim lips have knelt and kissed the threshold: the martlet building beneath the eaves was to you a sacred thing — a household religion. There was not a part of that habitation— we care not whether of stone or mud—that was not enriched by the unconscious magic of the dear sleeper within. As the sun rose, from the very chimneys, as from the olden statue, it drew forth hidden harmonies.

We cannot answer for the feelings of Brown, but we put it to the reader to say what our hero ought to have felt, gazing at the sweet domestic cot, where his own unpaired dove lay nestling. No stranger would have thought the cottage the house of Jeffrey Writly, the town attorney. It was a very bower built of roses, jessamine, and honeysuckle — an abode for Flora. Not a brick but was hidden by some climbing shrub. "Jeffrey Writly live here! who 'd have thought it?" Such was the cry of those suddenly made aware of his practice, but before ignorant of his dwelling-place. We remember a circumstance which provoked a like surprise in an elderly lady admiring, with others, a most beautiful foreign snake. "What a lovely skin! What a beautiful outside! What a dear! Ha!" —and the lady gave a truly feminine shriek—"Look at its sting! Well, who 'd have thought it!"

Brown continued to gaze in silence, when there suddenly broke upon his meditations a sound of wheels. He turned his eyes from the window of Maria, and bending them upon the dusty, white road, walked, trailing his rod behind him, slowly on. He was absorbed, fighting his infirmity; yes, he felt his silence to be weak—foolish: he certainly would declare himself to Maria; because he had not spoken, should he always hold his tongue? Because he knew not how to make love, was he never to learn?

"Hey! hillo! hey! Want to be run over?" shouted a voice behind.

Brown started to the side of the road, looked round, and,

amidst a cloud of dust raised by the vehicle, caught a rapid, but a very certain glance of Maria Writly, about three minutes before lifted from her bedroom window by Jack Simmons, who, for his politeness, had been rewarded by the lady with a seat by her side. Brown had been wafting all sorts of prayers and wishes to the sleeping Maria — the said Maria at the time waiting with her bandboxes for Jack Simmons and a post-chaise. Within the past month a dead aunt had considerably enhanced the value of Maria Writly, at least in the judicious eyes of Jack Simmons.

Angling is a contemplative employment: hence, Brown having lost his mistress was, we presume, in the best mood to fish. He walked to the stream—to that very stream into which in bygone years he had ventured with Jones, Robinson, and the hapless Smith!

It was evening when the suffering Brown returned from the "great waters." The day had, indeed, been luckless; a truth that unconsciously escaped him. He returned down the lane; but, could he pass the cottage of Maria? No; again he paused before the door; again he stared at the window.

"What sport to-day?" asked a yeoman of the rapt angler, still looking at the window. "What sport?"

"Too bad—too bad!" said Brown, pondering on the flight of Maria.

"What! got nothing—eh?" cried the farmer.

With a profound sigh, and an unutterable look at the casement, Brown incoherently exclaimed, "Not even a nibble!"

CHAPTER II.

We have seen Brown fail in his first hopes—we have seen him a victim to the dogmas of his schoolmaster. The judicious sentence of that profound teacher continued, as we hope to shew, to influence the conduct of the pupil through all his

days. The fate of Brown was a practical example of the wisdom of the pedagogue. Jack Simmons and Maria Writly are man and wife, and Brown is gone from his native village.

"A thousand pounds! What can I possibly do with a thousand pounds?" asked Brown with an air of deep distress. The question was put to a middle-aged man with a pounds-shillings-and-pence face, who shrank from the question as a devout Mahometan would recoil from the profane inquiry of a Jew.

"Do with it, Mr. Brown?" cried Dribbleton—(he had been left executor by Brown deceased)—"Do with it!" Dribbleton raised his eyes to the ceiling and was dumb.

"I have never been used to money," observed Brown; "and —and" the helpless condition of the speaker was really pitiable, "what *can* I do with it?"

"Do with it?" exclaimed Dribbleton, for the third time; "why," and the advice was quite paternal, "lay it out to the best advantage." Solon, turned huckster, could not have spoken better wisdom. It was, however, lost upon Brown, who still excused himself from future action on the cogent ground of past and present passiveness.

"Suppose, Mr. Brown—for I think I can put you in the way of turning your patrimony to account—suppose you go abroad, and——"

"I should have no objection whatever; only, the fact is, I— I never *was* at sea," said Brown, "and how *can* I go?"

"Then what is to be done with you?" cried Dribbleton, with a look of despair, and the look was exchanged with interest by Brown.

The main points of the above brief dialogue were for several days repeated. At length, Dribbleton, on the seventh meeting with Brown, had prepared himself to end the difficulty, at least so far as it involved his duty as an executor.

"Well, Mr. Dribbleton!" said Brown, entering the room with his customary sickly smile, "Well, Mr. Dribbleton!" and he sank resignedly upon a chair.

The executor acknowledged the greeting; lifted the lid of his desk; took from it a bank-note; produced a stamp; and then held out a pen to his visitor, who continued to stare wonderingly at the action. "Here is the note," said Dribbleton; "and now sign me a receipt. My time is precious, Mr. Brown, and—you see—it is a thousand pound, and—" and still Dribbleton proffered the goose-quill.

"But I never did sign for such a sum," said Brown; "and if, Mr. Dribbleton—" but the executor was inexorable. He almost forced the pen between the rigid thumb and finger of Brown, who, after a great internal struggle, signed the receipt: as he let fall the pen, he broke into a perspiration, for he had never signed for a thousand pounds before!

Brown quitted Mr. Dribbleton, and, with a thousand pounds upon him, found himself alone—alone in the hungry streets of wicked London. Here was a situation! With his hand griping the note in his pocket, he stood and stared about him. As his fingers played with the flimsy treasure, he felt as if his whole anatomy was turning into Bank paper. He could scarcely breathe, so much was he oppressed with a sense of his own value. He seemed sublimated into one piece of treasure! And then—for we will not be silent on the infirmity—the uncharitable looks he darted upon every passenger! Brown, with only a trifle in his pouch, was really a benevolent fellow, —thinking the best of everybody about him. But the same Brown with a thousand pounds in his pocket looked upon every man, woman, and child as a trickster and a cut-purse. With his fingers still playing about the paper to be sure of its presence—with his whole anatomy drawn in and up, and his eyes, like the eyes of a bandit in the phantasmagoria, rolling from side to side, Brown pursued his way, starting at intervals from the too near approach of suspected passengers. It will impart a vague idea of the morbid terror of Brown—of his fantastic weakness, transforming goodness itself into something evil—when we inform the reader that our hero absolutely

trembled and grasped his note with a convulsive hand as he was accidentally jostled by what he considered to be three notorious pickpockets, when, in very truth, they were a leash of the most respectable stockbrokers; nay, once, in his fright and fumbling for the note, he was about to scream "Stop thief!" after an elderly gentleman, who proved to be not only a Quaker, but a corn-dealer. May all our friends be preserved from a thousand pounds, say we: and, with the long ears of our imagination, we hear the reader respond "Amen!" Who would not rather choose philanthropy with empty pockets, than low suspicion with a thousand pounds?

"My dear fellow! the very man I wanted to see! How are you?" Such was the rapid greeting of Miles Butcherly to Brown, as he walked, or rather slunk, feverishly down Ludgate-hill, his fingers still at his treasure. "Eh! Why, don't you know me? What's the matter? Lost anything?" asked Butcherly.

Sooth to say, the manner of Brown fully authorized the question and the assumed calamity. For Butcherly having, with all the force of good fellowship, thrust his arm suddenly within the arm of Brown—the arm belonging to the hand, the fingers of which played with the bank-note—caused that valuable document to rise up to the very brink of Brown's pocket, and in so doing, we may, in popular phrase, declare brought Brown's "heart to his mouth." Indeed, the analogy of the accidents is very striking. Thus, it was no wonder Butcherly was astonished at the strange looks of his recent friend—it was no wonder that Brown looked at Miles Butcherly as if he did not know him. Brown had a thousand pounds in his pocket, and such forgetfulness under such circumstances may have often happened. However, Brown felt that his bank-note was perfectly safe, and then held out his unemployed hand to Butcherly.

Miles Butcherly was one of the ten thousand men on town who, according to the vulgar notion, live upon nothing. There

was once the same popular fallacy respecting the nature of cameleons; they sustained themselves, it was asserted, by merely breathing. Later science has shewn the error of this conclusion; has proved that the animal finds nourishment in flies. Now, Miles Butcherly was a human cameleon; his enemies declared he had nothing whatever to exist upon; whereas, Miles Butcherly lived, and well too, upon flies; from the "small gilded" insect to the big blue-bottle, every fly was food to him. For the present we must beg the reader to consider Brown—a fly.

"Where are you going?" asked Butcherly; and, without waiting for a reply, hospitably observed—"You must dine with me: must; I have said it."

Brown suffered himself to be walked away under custody of Butcherly, and, the effect of the first shock being past, even looked upon his friend as a sort of body-guard to the thousand pound note. They walked some distance in silence; at length, Butcherly broke the peace.

"Did you ever have a French dinner?"

"Never," said Brown; "and, as I never did, I think I——"

"Ought to have one directly," concluded Butcherly.

"My dear Sir," said Brown, with new gravity, "pardon me; I assure you, as I never have, it is quite against my principles—to——"

"Nonsense," cried Butcherly: "principles! pooh!—I hate the bigotry of patriotism. A man doesn't love his own country the less for eating the dishes of other people! In the matter of dining, Mr. Brown, a man should be a cosmopolite." And on this point no man carried his theory into more frequent practice than the speaker. "Mr. Brown, whilst you live, never let politics interfere with the liberty of the knife and fork. Come along."

"But I tell you, Mr. Butcherly, it is against an established rule of my life——"

"Won't have it, Mr. Brown: if you have a hatred of the

French, dine with 'em three times a week, and you'll wish to be naturalized. Cat and dog are natural enemies; but when puss and the terrier are made to eat out of the same dish, you can't think how soon they become friends. The cooks, Sir, have done more to destroy national antipathies than all the philosophers. For myself, I wouldn't declare war even against New Zealand until I had taken dinner with the chiefs."

"The New Zealanders, Mr. Butcherly! Dine with the New Zealanders!—wretches who——" and Brown was really indignant.

"Abuse 'em if you like," said Butcherly: "very economical people; we only kill our enemies—they eat 'em. We hate our foes to the last; whilst there's no learning in the end how they are brought to relish 'em."

Brown, making wry faces as he walked, was led victoriously off by Butcherly, who, in his ignorance, believed Brown to have some social prejudice against the French, which, in his own words, Butcherly was resolved "to dine out" of him. The reader, however, will hardly fail to attribute the disinclination of Brown to its right cause: he never had taken a French dinner, and therefore, he never——but, in this instance, the resolves of Brown were as threads of flax against the strength of Butcherly. Brown, with his fingers still upon his note, was safely deposited in a house, where the steam from the kitchen, with its first cloud, transported the visitor direct to Paris.

"Capital, isn't it?" said Butcherly, at about the fourth dish. "I dare say, Brown, you have heard of frogs?"

Brown sat suddenly upright, casting a suspicious eye at Butcherly.

"All safe, now—not in season." Brown again stooped to his plate. "Ha! frogs have been a dear dish to me." Brown looked interrogatively. "I'll tell you: I hate national prejudices; so brought an uncle here to 'dine 'em out' of him. He enjoyed his dinner amazingly; ate, I may say it, like a chaplain. Well he was rich—very rich, indeed—or I hadn't

brought him here." Brown cast his eyes up at Butcherly. "You know, he wasn't the capital fellow you are—little wine with you, Brown;—well, when he had dined, I asked him what he thought of the French? He could say nothing; he blushed to the edges of his ears with shame. I, however, pushed the question—'What do you think of the French *now*, uncle?' 'Not so bad,' said he, with a look of contrition; 'not so bad, if they wouldn't eat frogs.' There I had him. 'You recollect the third dish,—delicious, wasn't it?' The old fellow smacked his lips with recollections of delight. 'In that dish, there were two-and-thirty frogs!' Well, what do you think of prejudice, Brown? My uncle insisted upon falling ill immediately—was carried home—went to bed—scratched me out of his will—and died!"

"But not of frogs?" exclaimed Brown.

"Would you believe the wickedness of woman?" said Butcherly: "a nurse was found to swear that, in his last moments, she heard 'em croak! See what comes of national prejudice. A little burgundy?"

A little, and a little burgundy, and the heart of Brown melted like a jelly in his bosom, and Butcherly, with an educated eye, remarked the amiable softness of his friend, and thus, in few but significant words, addressed him. Squaring his elbows on the table, and looking up in the face of the genial Brown, Miles Butcherly observed—"My dear Brown, you could n't lend me twenty pounds?"

In an instant, the face of Brown was as rigid as carved walnut, and his glistening eyes became like the eyes of fish. "Twenty pounds! Why, I should have no objection—none, whatever—only, as I never did lend money, I—I——" Brown could say no more, notwithstanding Butcherly felt that he had said enough.

"Not another word," said Butcherly; 'tis no matter, none in——Ha! boys—glad to see you—sit down—my friend, I may say, my bosom friend—the kind creature I've so often

spoken of—my dear friend, Brown." And Butcherly introduced our hero to two young gentlemen, who acknowledged the honour with a knowing stare at the innocent Brown; who, by degrees, felt his blood glow again, again felt his heart expanding with the wine.

"I don't know how it is—surely, the hours are longer than they used to be — only ten o'clock — shall we have a cut at cards?" said one of the new comers.

"Brown, I am afraid," said Butcherly, in a voice of unaffected regret, "does n't play."

"I never have played — never," said Brown, intending to imply that he never would.

However, the cards were brought, and one of the strangers, shuffling them with miraculous grace, lounged towards Brown, and, with a benevolence lost upon its object, observed—"O! light stakes, Mr. Brown—light stakes, for beginners. Must kill time in self-defence. What do you say, Brown?"

For a minute Brown replied not; it was plain enough that he was absorbed, paralyzed by some sudden horror. He sat, his head sunk in his shoulders, his right leg raised tremblingly from the ground, as though he had trodden on a snake, and his hand—nay, half his arm—plunged into his pocket. His jaw fell, his eyes started, and his very nose curled with terror. Had he been struck with sudden paralysis? Worse: with sudden poverty.

"What's the matter, Brown?" asked the gentleman, the cards still flying from his hand like sparks from an anvil. "What's the matter?"

"Thieves! my money—I 'm robbed—robbed!" cried Brown, and he looked accusingly at Butcherly and his two friends, who rose together from their seats, and exclaimed "Sir!" Brown, however, heeded not their injured dignity; but, with a violent action of the hand, displayed that most affecting spectacle within this world of sorrows—that Gorgon to friends —that pestilence to best acquaintance—that type of worthless-

ness, and badge of shame—an empty pocket! Butcherly and his companions beheld the exhibition with proper disgust, repeating with additional emphasis, "Sir!" Brown seized a candle, looked under the table; in an instant replaced the taper, and fell back in his chair, breathing the softest sigh. As he lay, his face broke into smiles, and opening his eyes, shaking his head, and shewing a paper pellet between his finger and thumb, he merely observed, "I thought I had lost it." The truth is, Brown, too careful of the thousand pound note, had kept his fingers upon it, and rolling and rolling it until it had become as round as a bolus, it had escaped from his pocket as he rose to bow to the new-comers, who, now aided by Butcherly, sat with darkening brows, staring destruction at our hero; he merely repeating, with a new smile, "I thought I had lost it."

"You called me a——but you know, Sir, what must follow," said the stranger with the cards to Brown; "satisfaction, Sir," and he tapped his fingers on the table.

"Satisfaction, Sir," said the second stranger, adjusting his shirt-collar.

"Honour demands it, Mr. Brown," said Butcherly, somewhat tremulously: "I am sorry for it, but—satisfaction."

Brown smoothed out the note upon the table, and folding it, and placing it in his waistcoat-pocket, observed, "I am perfectly satisfied."

"You must fight, Sir," said the first stranger, speaking very confidentially to Brown.

"Fight, Sir," said the second.

"Exactly," corroborated Butcherly.

"But I never did fight," exclaimed Brown; "and therefore, I—I never can—I never will."

"You are a poltroon," said the first stranger.

"And a scoundrel," added his friend.

"A poltroon and a scoundrel," confirmed Butcherly, adding the weight of his authority.

"Poltroon—scoundrel," repeated Brown; "why, Mr. Butcherly, you don't mean to call me——"

"A poltroon, and a scoundrel," said the imperturbable Butcherly; "and, Sir, if you have any doubt of the fact——"

"Well, Sir?" asked Brown. "And what then, Sir?"

"Then, Sir, myself and friends will have no hesitation in giving it you on a stamped receipt."

Brown was not so punctilious as to demand any such instrument. On the contrary, he seemed disposed to be perfectly satisfied with the verbal acknowledgment of the parties, who were about to quit the apartment, when one of the strangers stopped, as if he had suddenly recollected some serious duty: then, returning to Brown, he thus briefly addressed him: —"You have insulted me, and you deny me the satisfaction of a gentleman: I am very sorry, but I must——" and, with incredible dexterity, the speaker caught the nose of Brown between his thumb and finger.

"Sir—what am I to think?" exclaimed Brown, jumping from his seat; "I say, Sir, what am I to think?" Brown could, for the moment, say no more, for the second stranger had suddenly caught the nose as suddenly quitted by the first. "Very sorry—very sorry," and the stranger tweaked.

"Sir—Sir," cried Brown, when released, "what am I to understand—I ask, Sir, what am I to understand——" but the executioner had left the room, and Brown looked upon Butcherly alone.

"Take a seat—be quiet, Mr. Brown—take a seat, I have something to say to you," said Butcherly; and the calm dignity of his manner awed our hero into obedience. Brown sank upon a chair, gasping and rubbing his nose, that burned and glowed like a red cinder. "We have known one another some time, Mr. Brown," said Butcherly, and Brown bowed assent. "It was my wish that our intimacy should ripen into a lasting friendship." Brown rubbed his nose. "You have many admirable qualities, no doubt, Mr. Brown: it was my

fond hope to endeavour to discover and appreciate them. I believe you have an excellent heart—that, altogether, you are, despite some human weaknesses, a most estimable person." Brown clasped his hands, and was overpowered by the eulogy. "But, Mr. Brown, whilst I appreciate the virtues of another, I cannot forget what is due to myself. Therefore, although I believe you to be a most humane, a most amiable, a most upright man, still, Sir, the stern duty I owe to myself and to society, compels me—believe me, much against my will—to pull your nose."

The unrelenting vigour with which Butcherly asserted the right due to society and himself was in terrible contrast to the meekness, the almost mellifluous softness of speech with which he passed sentence. Had the nose of Brown been jammed between an iron staple its owner could not have roared more lustily. The landlord, the waiters, the chambermaids—the whole household—rushed to the scene of punishment. Butcherly quitted his hold, and with astonishing equanimity, and a graceful inclination of the body, passing his hand around his beaver as he spoke, he thus addressed the sufferer—

"Mr. Brown, it has cost me much to do this; I have had to struggle against the force of friendship: but, Sir, society has its claims; and believe me that, in pulling your nose, I have only considered what is due to the usages of the world and to my sense of self-respect. In having pulled your nose, I disclaim anything personal. I have been grieved to do it; but self-sacrifice, Mr. Brown, makes a part of the social compact." And Butcherly, with a low bow, and pressing his hat to his breast, retired. Now, had Butcherly cut the throat of Brown in an "affair of honour," could he have given a more profound, a more philosophical reason for the necessity of the sacrifice?

"Why, Sir," cried the landlord to Brown, "what's the matter?"

"Matter?" exclaimed Brown—"matter!—I—I was never so served in all my days!"

"What's the matter?" asked a gentleman who entered the room.

"The gentleman has had his nose pulled, Sir," said the waiter, pointing to Brown.

"Yes, Sir," said Brown, "it's true—perfectly true; and what to do I don't know."

"You don't?" exclaimed the visitor.

"No, Sir, I don't," cried Brown. "How should I? I should be happy to know, Sir; for the fact is, Sir, I—no—I—I never before in all my life—never had my nose pulled?"

The nose of Brown had been pulled—tweaked—pinched with impunity; and Brown was to all his friends a banished man. He was touched—blown to all the world. In after-days he could have cut off the tainted part—could, at one stroke, have exercised the curse that still stood prominently forth between his cheeks, so that with the loss he might have gained his former friends. The nose, before its degradation, had an aquiline tendency; since its fall, it inclined somewhat upwards, at least to the morbid eyes of its wearer, as if shrinking from the approach of all things human. It was the nose of a modern saint raising itself to the sky, by scenting this world as it were a dunghill. However, in time, Brown grew forgetful of the ignominy his nose had suffered, and found for it a sweet oblivion of misfortune in rappee. Moreover, Brown, reading the works of a certain philosopher, discovered that man sloughs his whole mass of clay once in a certain number of years; and therefore, that the nose he wore was not, in fact, the nose in years by-gone assaulted, but every particle of it a new nose—an untouched, untweaked organ: a virgin nose, a nose unpulled! Here is comfort for the family of the Browns; here is consolation for the kicked, to know that in a few years—we think seven the stated number—the shame is gone, exhaled, hour by hour and day by day, with the suffering region.

Let us, however, not too far pursue this delicate disquisition; for if in seven years such changes come, what pleas may criminals put in! The pickpocket of 1837 may plead an alibi for the accused hand of 1844! "Thou canst not say 'twas *I* that did it!" exclaims the palm of later date. But we have done: there are some subtleties to be discussed only by philosophers over their spring-water and——brandy; and this question of physical identity might create confusion among even the most respectable families. In a word, in a few years Brown felt that the nose he wore had never been pulled; his moral man was comforted by his material. His late dear friends and best acquaintance "bore a brain," it is true; but Brown himself slumbered in a wise forgetfulness.

CHAPTER III.

Brown continued to creep through life; every day serving him to accumulate justifying reasons for present and future inactivity. He had, fortunately, fallen into honest hands; for shortly after the accident narrated in our last chapter, he was received into the family of a small tradesman, who, relieving our helpless hero of his new perplexity—that of laying out his own money on his own wants—gave him board and bed for the interest of his inheritance, he slumbering through twenty years of his existence, with no more thought of the world around him—of its cares and its delights, than the counter of Jeremy Quick, his indefatigable landlord.

Brown, according to the theory of philosophers, was already wearing his third nose from the date of the assault by Butcherly and his friends, that is, upwards of twenty years had elapsed since that memorable catastrophe, when Jeremy Quick, with his shining, prosperous face, and his blithe, chirping voice, entered the room of our hero with a gay "Good-morning."

"Good-morning, Mr. Quick!" said Brown, laying down a morning paper—a journal that had twenty times performed the noisome feat of devouring its own words, but which was still the oracle of Brown, for the best of reasons—he never *had* read any other paper.

Mr. Quick drew a chair opposite to Brown, and seating himself, with his clasped fingers in his lap, and a more than usually lustrous smile on his smooth countenance, he looked benignantly in the face of his lodger, cleared his throat, and said, "Mr. Brown, we have now been together in this house upwards of twenty years."

"Twenty years, Mr. Quick. It quite seems to me that I have never lived in any other," said Brown. "A charming house!"

"Tolerably well," said Quick: "but the fact is, I came to tell you that I am about to give up the house." Brown started and looked grave at this piece of intelligence—for it threatened his repose. Could a spider comprehend the mischief of a hair-broom, it would view that instrument with a dread akin to that with which Brown contemplated the face of Quick.

"Give up the house! explain yourself, Mr. Quick," said Brown.

"Mr. Brown," and the smiling landlord approached his lodger, and shook him cordially by the hand—"Mr. Brown, it is now upwards of twenty years since we were introduced to one another. At that time, Sir, you had a thousand pounds."

"A new sum to me—I may say it, quite a trouble. It was a happy day for me when I met you, Mr. Quick," said Brown.

"You had exactly one thousand pounds," repeated Quick, "and that—that was twenty years ago."

A cloud fell upon the face of Brown. From the manner of Quick, our hero rashly divined that his landlord was about to exhibit a long accompt for bed and board, placing him in the

light, or rather in the dark shadow of a debtor. "I told you, Mr. Quick," said Brown, his face colouring somewhat—"I told you, you couldn't afford it. To have lived and lodged as I have, and on the interest of only a thousand pounds, I told you it was not to be done. I knew that when you came to reckon——"

"Hear me, my dear Mr. Brown—compose yourself"—for Brown began to shift restlessly in his seat—"compose yourself, and hear me. Ha! Sir, you can't tell what I suffered for six months after I received you."

"And I have been a burthen, and I—I have never seen it!" cried Brown, in a contrite spirit.

"You have been a blessing to me, Mr. Brown," said the whipmaker—for Quick, the kindest of men, was, in the way of business, a dealer in scourges—"listen to me, Sir; pray, listen. When we met I had been married two years——"

"Martha was thirteen months old," said Brown.

"To a day," said Quick. "I had no capital—none; all my stock was in my window. I hadn't a friend when I met you. Well, you forced your money on me; it was, you said, of no use to you; you had never been in trade; all you wanted was——"

"What I have had, Mr. Quick: your roof, and your board, and no trouble," said Brown.

"'T is all over now; but you don't know the days I was worn, the nights I lay awake, the blame I heaped upon myself for having used what was not my own; the dreams I had, seeing you houseless, and in rags, and I—I the cause, Mr. Brown."

"But that has n't happened, Mr. Quick; and as it never has——"

"I bless my stars, Mr. Brown, there 's little fear of it now. There, Mr. Brown," and Quick laid a slip of paper in the hand of his lodger.

"What is this? A cheque for a thousand pounds?"

"Your money, Mr. Brown," said Quick. "You had a thousand pounds when——"

"Well, but that—that is in the three per cents," cried Brown.

"Very true; but then, you see, compound interest, Mr. Brown."

"Interest! but hav'n't I lived upon you?—Heaven forgive me!—for the last twenty years," cried the lodger.

"Mr. Brown,"—and Quick rose, and tears came into his eyes as he caught the hand of his tenant—"without your money I might have had no roof, no bed. Now, all I have to ask of you is, that you'll think yourself to have been my guest from the first day you came here."

"Impossible!" cried Brown.

"You must. And, what is more, you must leave this house," said Quick.

"How *can* you ask it? As I have never lived in any other for the last twenty years, how is it possible that——"

"The truth is, Mr. Brown, we have made money enough. I am rich—rich beyond every want. Now, had you but used your own thousand pounds, I might have been pennyless, and you a man of wealth."

"Very true, very true," said Brown: "but then, as I never *had* ventured any money, how could I begin?"

This argument, the text of his whole life—a text whipped into him by his schoolmaster—was sufficient to Brown, who was perfectly satisfied at having been the cause of wealth in others, he remaining poor himself.

It was a hard task for the retired whipmaker to carry Brown from London. For a long time he stuck with the tenacity of a muscle to his old abode; but was at length induced to emigrate by the circumstance of Quick purchasing an estate in the neighbourhood wherein Brown had passed his schoolboy days.

Brown was close on fifty when he returned to his native

place; the self-same Brown that left it. Here he found, retired in ease and dwelling in the house of her late father, the widow of the bold, decided Jack Simmons, who had arrived at the honours of City clerk ere he slept beneath the sculptured glories of a marble monument. Quick died; his girls were married and carried off; his boys were thrifty dealers in London; and Brown, at sixty, had consumed so much food—had slept so many hours—had breathed so many tons of vital air.

Nothing was left our hero, save fishing and the evening society of Mrs. Simmons. Neighbours, with unseemly levity, would wink knowingly, and prophesy a marriage. Nay, the curate once boldly put the question to our bachelor. "People would talk; Mr. Brown was very constant in his visits to the cottage; did he really intend to marry Mrs. Simmons?"

"Really, Mr. Ringdove, the fact is, I—whatever my intentions might have been forty years ago—bless me! is it so long?—I remember, Sir,"—and Brown pointed to some noble elms—"those trees were then no thicker than my stick—whatever my intentions were, I—as I—that is, as I never have married, could I marry now?"

Another year elapsed, and the widow Simmons was gathered to her departed lord. Her death was somewhat sudden. To Brown it brought peculiar pain; for in their last interview high words—such was the term his self-accusing spirit gave the following syllables—had passed between him and the deceased.

"Indeed, Mr. Brown," said the widow, flinging down her cards, "I am quite tired of cribbage. Do'nt you play chess?"

"No, Ma'am," said Brown.

"Come, then, I do'nt mind if I take the trouble of teaching you. Susan, bring the board."

"Madam, I feel your kindness," said Brown, calmly shuffling the cards; "but, as I never *have* played at chess, it appears to me very absurd that, at my time of life, I should attempt to learn."

"Ha! Brown, Brown!"—and the widow looked mournfully at the bachelor—"if you had but known everything from the first, what a man you might have been!"

Brown was alone. He had no wife, no child, no kin to care for him. His sole companion was his fishing-rod; and in the long summer days he would stand or sit dreamingly upon an old plank, projecting above that stream wherein he once went to learn to swim, and was sagely whipped for the imprudence. What were his thoughts—what his meditations on the nothingness of the past, and the consequent barrenness of the present, we will not consider. Thinking of the wisdom of the schoolmaster, Brown may have sometimes seen the pedagogue rise from the water, as the Saracen saw the ghost of Angelica's brother—

"Insino al petto uscir, d'aspetto fiero."

Perhaps it was at some such moment that Brown hastily leaned his back against the rail above the plank, and that the rotten support, snapping with the weight, suffered our elderly angler to fall into the water, which had been to him the bitter waters of his youth. Happily—for Brown had never learned to swim—his mishap was witnessed by a younger brother of the line, who plucked the struggler from the death below, and, in a brief time, conducted him to his lonely home.

"It is nothing—nothing at all," said Brown to his housekeeper, who begged her master to go between hot blankets. "He never had cared for wet, and ought he to care now?"

At eleven o'clock next morning Brown was still in bed. "Medicine! he had never taken medicine; and if he were a little feverish or so, it was sure to go off. He never had kept his bed for a day, and he would get up." Brown rose.

The next day Brown kept his bed. "Your hand, Sir, if you please," said the doctor, brought, on her own responsibility, by the housekeeper. "Humph! very feverish; a blister, Mr. Brown."

"Pshaw! I never had a blister," said the patient.

"And I must bleed you."

"Bleed! I tell you, Mr. Squills, I never lost a drop of blood in my life—and, therefore, I never will."

Brown was obstinate: no blister, no lancet would he suffer to approach him. The fourth day the doctor appeared, and shook his head as he looked upon the eight uncorked bottles on the sick man's table. "He had lived sixty years without medicine, and was it likely physic would do him good now?"

Squills opened the curtains, and shook his head still more anxiously. "If I had only bled him," said Squills to the curate.

"Never—never—never was bled in all my life," said Brown, and died.

Such was the life and death of Brown. Are there not Browns political—Browns philosophical—Browns scientific? Truly, the Browns are a great family.

Our next shall speak of "Jones."

II. Jones, who could swim "a little."

CHAPTER I.

"Well," said he to Jones, "can you swim?" "A little, Sir." "A little!" said the master; "why you were in more danger than Brown, and might have been drowned, if you had ventured much further. Take him up," said he.

Such was the argument, such the command of the schoolmaster, as shadowed forth in the immortal spelling-book of Daniel Fenning,—and the luckless Jones, because he could swim "a little," was taken up.

There is a season when the branding-iron marks less than the birch. Throughout his life Jones was content to do only a little, that little leading to nothing save the self-exaltation of the doer, who was wont to stop half-way in his purpose, rub his hands, crow, and bless his stars that he had not ventured "much further."

We hasten to take Jones from school, and present him, a full-grown responsible biped, in the Metropolis.

(And here, gentle reader, we intend to follow the example of that cunning master in his art, old-fashioned Ben Jonson, who does not, like two or three of his descendants, bring on his men and women to tell their histories to themselves, as thus—"I 'm a young man of an old family, very much in love with Elenora, who is about to elope with me this evening, if by any possibility I can raise the money to pay the post-boys:" or, "Hapless creature that I am! betrayed into a Fleet marriage three years ago with the heartless Edward Montgomery, who had at the time a wife and two fair pledges." No, no; Ben tells his history, exhibits his characters by incidents, not by soliloquies. That glorious brawl of Face, Subtle, and Doll Common, lets us at once into the secret of their compact—clamorously publishes the coming of the Alchymist. Thus, let an occurrence discover the inward mystery of Jones.)

Jones stood before the mansion of Lord Loaves, the newly-appointed governor of an island, far away "amid the melancholy main." Jones had walked three miles on a sultry day that he might bow to his lordship, and, on the strength of the patriotic endeavours of his uncle in several elections, ask of the governor a few crumbs of official bread. Jones stood with his friend Short, a fellow-townsman, with claims similar to his own upon the consideration of his lordship.

"Now, Jones!"—and Short was about to ascend the steps.

"Stop! stop!" exclaimed Jones; "what are you going to do?"

"Do! why this is the house," said Short.

"It is, eh? Well, I tell you what, Short," and Jones eyed the knocker he had walked two miles to touch—"this is the house, is it? Well, I tell you what"—and Jones looked very seriously at the knocker, and spoke with startling emphasis—"I tell you what—*I 'll write!*" and with this determination Jones walked very boldly from the door.

Short knocked, and the sound almost paralyzed the heart of the retreating Jones. The door was opened, and Short had an audience of his lordship.

A month passed away, and Short presented himself to bid farewell to Jones. Short had been preferred to one of the offices in the gift of his lordship, and was about to go on shipboard for the voyage.

"You're a lucky fellow—a very lucky fellow, Short," said Jones. "A beautiful climate you are going to—and then there's small patronage—a very nice salary, and—well, you are a lucky fellow;" and Jones looked up and down his friend, as if he had been an animal of a new species. "You *are* a lucky fellow."

"Yes, I think so. There's only one thing that annoys me; and that is, parting with you." Jones shook Short's hand, squeezing it with a reciprocity of feeling. "I am sure the fellow who has got what you wanted hasn't half your ability." Again Jones shook Short's hand. "But, however, the greater the fool, the greater the——;" for the moment Short forgot his own promotion,—"That is, I—I wish you were going."

"I should have liked it—nothing better," said Jones.

"And what astonishes me is, that his lordship—for you *did* write, you say?"

"Yes, O yes!" said Jones—"I wrote."

"Well, it is so unlike his lordship! I am so astonished that he never answered your letter," said Short.

"I—don't know for that," said Jones, hesitating.

"Don't know? I think a man who doesn't answer the letter of a gentleman deserves to — to be called out," cried Short, with some animation.

"I almost think so, too," said Jones.

"Then what excuse have you for his lordship? *He* has not answered your letter. How can you excuse that?" asked Short.

"Why, there is some excuse for his lordship," said the

charitable Jones; "for though I wrote the letter—I—I never *sent it.*"

Jones, disappointed in his hopes of colonial employment, was presented with an ensign's commission by his liberal uncle. Jones looked a peaceable recruit, but who that saw him could predict what he might be—could count upon the victories he might win!

(Reader, you have this morning taken an egg at breakfast—almost the simplest of human food. It is the type of frugality—the nourishment of saints and hermits. Molly thought nothing, as she dropt it in the saucepan — it was an egg, no more. Change the circumstances; and, warmed by the maternal breast, or heated by an Egyptian oven, the egg is chipped—not by your spoon, gentle reader—but by a living bill! The pullet chirps and grows; time passes, and lo! a cock, glorious in his plumes, self-complacent in his harem, struts and scratches, the king of the yard. What shouts! what clamours burst from the pit! Hear you that cry of victory? What does it proclaim? This; "Bill Giles 's bird has won!"—that cock 's a conqueror? Look at the hero with his blood-dyed spurs! Hear his exulting trumpet. A young recruit is an egg; he may become a household thing—on the contrary, he may stalk along the plain, a mighty victor! Never do we see a raw recruit that we do not think of an unboiled egg.)

Albeit Jones, in the restlessness of his new ambition, yearned for foreign service, having promised himself the most heroic achievements on the first and least opportunity against the enemy; still do we fear that the constitutional infirmity of the young warrior would not have suffered him to annihilate the foes of England. The valiant king of France, whom the trumpet-tongue of Fame declared to have "walked up a hill and down again," exhibited greater energy than we fear fell to the lot of Jones. We have no doubt that he would have rushed—flown to gather laurels, but not finding them *half-way* up the hill, would have quickly descended, applauding himself for a Fabius, that he had not "ventured much further."

Jones was not a soldier of six months' growth ere, having little else to do—for he had four months since given up the study of fortification—he fell in love. As nothing could be more natural, so nothing in the present case could promise greater advantages—the daughter of a retired merchant, with "a shower of beauty" and a shower of gold! Such was the desirable young woman who danced nearly the whole evening at the garrison-ball with Jones—who smiled, coloured, vowed she must not listen to him, then heard him for the rest of the night.

Was it accident—or what was it, that, on the evening of the next day, brought together, strolling on the ramparts, Augusta Blushly and Ensign Jones?

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The reader is under a deep debt of obligation to us for the above rows of stars, which we beg he will receive in lieu of the details of a love-scene. At the same time we desire to register it as our conscientious belief that the aforesaid stars are admirable substitutes for any words that can by any possibility be spoken by persons meeting with the same motives, and under the same circumstances as Augusta Blushly and Ensign Jones. All that is to be said upon such a matter was said (according to the Chinese) ten thousand years ago, and everything uttered on the subject since that time is only a vile plagiary, which we are convinced every reasonable man and woman, betrayed into an unguarded time of life, like not, at a later season, to be reminded of. It is to such we write: hence, we will not, with some professors, seek to make our heroes, like Falstaff, "long winded" with barley-sugar bought of love.

Jones and Augusta met and met again. Unhappily, however, Augusta had a father. Not that Miss Blushly had before had cause to lament that accident; but circumstances will arise peculiarly trying to the obedience of a daughter. Mr. Blushly, with every respect for the military character in the abstract,

cared not for it in the person of Ensign Jones. It was very strange that Mr. Blushly could not view an object with the same eyes as his daughter. Very strange!

"We must part for ever," said Augusta to Jones, and then proceeded to describe to the amiable young soldier a late scene with her father, in which—so blind was Mr. Blushly to the merits of our hero—she had been forbidden to see Ensign Jones again; under penalty of close confinement, a regimen of bread and water, with more than a hint of the addition of iron bars at her chamber window.

"Then, no time is to be lost," exclaimed the Ensign.

"What would you do?" cried Augusta, in the voice, and with the looks of a "wire-wove" heroine.

"Nothing remains—nothing but flight," said Jones.

"Flight!" and from the horror painted on the countenance of Miss Blushly, it was evident the suggestion was wholly new to her.

"Flight," repeated the young soldier; and no veteran General ever pronounced the word with greater decision.

"Fathers, though cruel, should be obeyed," said Augusta.

"When they would tyrannize over the affections of their children—then they snap apart the ties that bind——"

The reader must finish the period from his own imagination; for Augusta Blushly, sinking in the arms of Ensign Jones, left him no more to say. The fortress had surrendered, and, as the mature reader may think, without discretion.

CHAPTER II.

The "White Lion" was an inn enjoying the best reputation on the North Road: the outward sign betokened the purity, and, withal, the strength of the potations to be had within. Mrs. Fairday, the amiable and fortunate landlady, presented her welcoming countenance at the door, as a chaise drove up. It was dusk, but the hostess, with an educated eye, read at a

glance the interesting history contained in the inside of the vehicle; for there sat Augusta Blushly and Ensign Jones. The lady, with uneasy looks at her lover, resigned herself to the hospitality of Mrs. Fairday, who ushered her into the best apartment, and, though perfectly aware of the venturous step taken by Miss Blushly—the rash girl had positively gone off with Ensign Jones, leaving nothing behind her but her prayers for her father, inclosed in a note upon her dressing-table—never ventured to hint at the imprudence, but lavished every kindness and attention upon Augusta.

"I think, post-boy, there's nothing to be afraid of now?" said Jones, as he gave the man a guinea.

"Never was more comfortable about anything in my life, Sir," said the post-boy, pocketing the coin with "measureless content."

"Yes, yes—I think we've gone far enough for to-night," observed Jones, complacently throwing himself into a chair. "Some supper. Now, my dear Augusta———"

"If—if Papa," murmured the young lady, looking almost reproachfully at Jones.

"It's impossible he should come up with us; we're twelve hours the better of him: and to-morrow, to-morrow at six, my beloved Augusta, we'll be on the road again. In the evening we shall reach——Hush! the waiter."

Supper was brought. Mrs. Fairday was incessant in her attentions. Jones ate and drank with the healthiest appetite, whilst Augusta played with the untouched wing of a fowl, continually casting glances towards the window.

"It's a very fine night, Ma'am, is it not?" asked Augusta of the landlady.

"Fine, but cold, Miss; and the roads are very heavy," said Mrs. Fairday.

"'Twould be killing you to go on to-night," cried Jones, and he swallowed some wine. "I tell you, my love, we are far enough."

Augusta bit her lip, and in silence looked towards the window.

"Another wing, dearest?" and Jones, with a deep look of love, and a winning smile about his mouth, proffered the member to the statue-like Augusta. "I wish, my sweetest girl, you'd take another wing."

"I wish I could take half-a-dozen," replied the fair runaway, with an expression of bitterness not lost upon the acute Mrs. Fairday, though unnoticed by the simple Jones.

"Now, you don't eat at all," exclaimed the Ensign with surprise. "I declare, you've touched nothing. You don't like it? Now, my darling girl——Oh! never mind Mrs. Fairday;" and Jones rose, and took the hand of Augusta, the landlady quitting the room. "Now, my dearest life! what will you have? What in the whole world would you most like?" and the Ensign hung over the fair and trembling maiden, soon to become his bride. "Why don't you speak, love? What—now tell me—what in the whole world would you most like?"

"Post-horses, Mr. Jones — post-horses!" and Augusta suddenly rose, looked with flashing eyes upon her lover, then burst into tears, and again sank upon the chair. Jones was astonished—paralyzed by the violence, the emotion of Miss Blushly.

"Now, Augusta! dearest Augusta! how can you be so silly? 'Twould be killing you to go on to-night: you have been harassed, agitated, fatigued beyond endurance; I am sure you have:" and the lover pressed the fingers of his mistress, who, dead to the attention, sat with her eyes bent upon the whiskers of a tiger worked in the hearth-rug, vehemently beating her little foot upon the effigies of that carnivorous animal. "Augusta!" exclaimed Jones, and he seemed to pull the word by syllables from the very end of his heart—"Augusta!"

"Oh! Papa!" cried the girl, in self-accusing voice, deaf to the winning tones of her passionate lover.

"Now, you will distress yourself without cause. I tell you, my own, own life,"—at these words Augusta stared coldly at the fervent Jones, but no coldness could chill warmth like his—"I tell you, we are quite safe until early to-morrow: you will then be refreshed for your journey; at six we shall be on the road to happiness again."

"You will lose my fortune, Mr. Jones, should my father overtake us," said Augusta, with sudden composure.

"Your fortune! My angel, speak not of your fortune,—it is you, and you alone that——"

"You 'll stay to-night, then, Sir?" asked Mrs. Fairday, entering suddenly.

"Yes: prepare two rooms—and mind"—and Jones gave the order with great emphasis—"be sure that the chaise is ready by six—not a moment later—six," and away, with shrugging shoulders, and, we fear, a contemptuous curl of the lip, went the hostess.

"Should my father come up with us, you 'll never see me more," said Augusta.

"Name it not! See you no more! How—how could I survive it?" asked the hero, threatened in the only vulnerable spot of his Achillean frame.

"He has already threatened to send me to France, and to shut me up in a nunnery," observed Augusta; and the young lady began to speak much more tranquilly than instead of discoursing with her to-morrow's husband, she was holding counsel with her milliner. "Yes, I assure you Mr. Jones, in a nunnery!" and Miss Blushly, we fear, out of the very frowardness of her sex, smiled at the threat of the very best of fathers.

"And does my own beloved think that the walls of a mere nunnery could hold her from my arms? No, Augusta, I would dare dangers—death—and tear you from the very altar!" As Jones made this proclamation, he felt nothing less than Louis Quatorze.

"You would?" asked Augusta, with half-shut eyes, and an indescribable smile. "You would, indeed, Jones?"

"Can you doubt it?" cried the soldier, and with a fervour that would have made it very uncivil in a lady to suspect him.

"Well, that would be a romance. To break open a nunnery for me! Well, I declare! Ha! ha!" and Augusta laughed, and Jones laughed too, though to a quicker ear than fell to the lot of Jones the mirth of his mistress might have rung a little hollow.

"I wish, my darling life, I could have prevailed upon you to take some fowl," said Jones, quickly returning from nuns to pullets.

"After all, I think I might as well," replied Augusta, whose appetite seemed to accompany her returning composure.

"That's right. Why, that's like yourself, dearest," cried the encouraging Jones. "You are quite assured again."

"Yes, Mr. Jones, yes; but—but it has cost me an effort." And had Jones not been as blind as love, he might have seen that, as Augusta raised the wine to her lips, she grasped the arm of the chair, as if sustaining herself against some strong emotion.

"Some more wine, love?" and Jones was about to fill.

"No more—not a drop, Mr. Jones;" and Augusta became pale, and trembled slightly.

"You are not well, my angel?" observed Jones, very innocently.

"I was better this morning, at least I thought so—but I am not so unwell as I was a short time since."

"And yet you would have gone on! Why, you see how wise it was in me not to have ventured any further!"

"It is impossible, Mr. Jones, to dispute your discretion."

"Whereas, to-morrow, as I said—to-morrow, my charming girl—at six to-morrow——" and Jones looked in the frozen eyes of Augusta.

"Six—to-morrow," echoed the maiden.

"When the lark is singing his song in heaven—when the glory of the sun—the balminess of the morning—the——"

"Ha!" shrieked Augusta, as she heard sudden footsteps in the passage, and ran to the door: ere she reached it, it was opened, and Augusta had thrown her arms about the neck of a middle-aged gentleman, and was sobbing "Papa—papa!—dear papa!"

"Caught ye, eh? Caught ye!" exclaimed Mr. Blushly.

"I'm so glad—I'll go home—directly, papa—directly!" said the girl, with evident delight.

"Augusta!" cried Ensign Jones, with no less astonishment at the fickleness of his mistress.

"Oh, papa! I see I have been wrong—very wrong—pray forgive me! And, Mr. Jones——"

"Augus—Madam!" answered the lover.

"You have, by your eloquent discourse, quite convinced me that you and I have journeyed far enough as fellow-travellers, and that it would be very, very irksome indeed, at least to one of us, to venture any farther!"

"So saying, Miss Blushly presented to Ensign Jones, as tokens of remembrance, a most elaborate curtesy, and a look of arch contempt, enough, in our opinion, to have levelled a constable.

Miss Blushly was handed by her happy father into the carriage, and driven to another inn—Jones being left a doomed bachelor for the remainder of his existence.

"She was a beautiful girl—had money, too—amiable and all," Jones would say, in after-life; "and yet, who knows how things might have turned out, had I ventured much farther?"

CHAPTER III.

In the course of years, and by means of purchase, Ensign Jones ripened into a Lieutenant. He had, on the outset of his career, bounded his ambition by a colonelcy: he had, however, advanced only a second step towards the dignity,

when, at the age of forty, he felt that he had gone far enough; and, his uncle dying, and bequeathing him house and lands, our hero sheathed his sword, and became a simple country gentleman. Leaving others to look for laurels, he would employ his energies in the cultivation of potatoes. And then the improvements he would effect in the old-fashioned mansion,—in the much neglected grounds! And, as in the beginning of everything, Jones always addressed himself to the highest authority on the subject, so, on taking possession of his new property, and meditating on the miraculous changes to be wrought in it, he called about him, and at the same time, twenty writers on draining, building, grafting, the growth of pines, and the breeding of cattle. Were a pig-sty to be erected, Jones would first consult Vitruvius.

"Well, Mattocks,"—thus spoke Jones to his steward, after two months' sojourn on his new property—I am afraid Mattocks, that the people about here are no better than they should be."

"'Twould be very difficult for some of us to live with 'em if they were," answered the steward, who had already sounded the character of his master.

"But I understand, Mattocks—indeed, I am sure of it—that there are poachers—poachers in the place," cried Jones. "They've been greatly encouraged, I fear? Now, whose to blame, eh? Tell me, whose fault is it?"

"Why, Sir, if I must speak out, I think all the fault lies with the pheasants. Your uncle, Sir——"

"My uncle was a very excellent man, Mattocks; but he was two easy with all the world. My uncle, good man! he'd not only have stood and bowed to a footpad, but would have thanked the thief for robbing him."

"He was, to be sure, a generous gentleman," said the steward.

"I like generosity, Mr. Mattocks; but I am also an admirer of perseverance and firmness: I can give away, I trust,

with a grace; but I—I can't be robbed. So listen; tell the keeper to arm half-a-dozen men, and let them all night keep watch in the preserves."

"Armed men, Sir! Guns! Why there never was such a thing heard of in the village," cried the steward.

"I'm sorry for it—very sorry that all the conveniences of life have not been better considered. And, Mr. Mattocks, I can't have my orchard a land of promise for all the boys in the country. Your boys about here are, I am afraid, very licentious."

"Very fond of apples, Sir," replied Mr. Mattocks.

"You'll immediately get a dozen traps for the orchard and gardens," ordered Jones, looking sternly.

"Traps! Now really, Sir, you'll pardon me, but you'd better chain a live griffin to every apple-tree than—traps! I don't think there's one in the county."

"I thought not, Mr. Mattocks—I thought not: that's why the gaol's so full. I thought not: that's why the county gaol is to be enlarged. You will, however, see my orders done. And, Mr. Mattocks, I'll not have my ponds fished in. Yesterday I ran after a boy whom I caught angling for trout. I wish I had caught the young rascal," said Jones.

"I know the boy, Sir: he came back in the evening; and —for I had seen you after him in the morning—and then I seized him," said the steward.

"Very right—very right, Mr. Mattocks. It is these little pilferings that are the beginning of burglaries and murder. You took away the tackle from the offender, I trust?"

"Yes, Sir; all the boy's tackle—willow-switch, thread, crooked pin, and everything," replied Mr. Mattocks, with a sly look at Jones, who coughed, affecting not to hear a description of the spoil.

And thus Jones, to the bewilderment of the neighbourhood, began to display that energy, that perseverance, to him so essential to the perfect man. Men—foreigners, as they were

termed by the dwellers on the soil—were hired from a distance, and, armed to the jaws, watched in the preserves. Painted notices of traps and spring-guns stood menacingly in the forbidden orchards; three mastiffs of spotless breed, were entrusted with the guard of certain tenements; and Homepickle Hall, the late abode of peace, seemed turned into a fortress to overawe the surrounding country. The cage, that either the morals of the people or the neglect of the magistracy had suffered to become a ruin, was surveyed, and its condition reported to 'Squire Jones, who, as it was complained, with more public spirit than benevolence, had resolved to repair it at his own cost; and a confidential retainer had, it was said, heard the landlord, in an unguarded social hour, promise a new coat of paint to the unused stocks.

All these improvements—all this energy on the part of Jones, as may be supposed, did not pass without a significant acknowledgment from the people. The stranger, who would learn the last resting-place of the new landlord's uncle, had only to watch the deportment of the villagers on meeting Jones coming to or returning from church. They looked with a blank stare in the face of Jones, and then, turning from him, made a profound reverence at the monument of the dead. This went to the heart of Jones, who, really wishing the good-will of all men, and even ignorant of the causes that withheld it from him, was, from a weakness in his character, hated as a despot.

Two or three weeks only had elapsed since the above scene with Jones and his steward, when the landlord, taking a solitary ride down a green lane, was roused from a deep study by the voice of a woman.

"That's he—there he rides! Oh, that there was a pit under his horse's hoofs!" cried the woman, pointing out Jones to a little ragged boy shambling by her side. "That's the blood-shedder!"

"My good woman," said Jones, pulling up his horse, "are you mad?"

The woman paused, turned round upon Jones, ground her teeth, and, with a look of hate, raised her clenched hand to the sky. She then, without a word, strode onward.

"My good woman—I say—my little boy—tell me, what's the matter?" and Jones cut off the retreat of the frightened urchin, who looked piteously after his mother. "Don't be afraid—what's the matter?"

"Father's very bad," said the little fellow.

"Very bad? What is he, eh?"

"He goes out—he goes out to work of nights; and he crawled home last night all over blood;" and the child began to whimper.

"All over blood! Why, don't be afraid, and tell me all; and look—here it is—I'll give you this guinea. Your father came home all over blood? Where did he get hurt?" asked Jones.

"Don't you say I told you," said the child, his eyes glittering at the guinea; "but he was in 'Squire Jones's ground."

"And what's your name?" demanded Jones, feeling himself an accused culprit. "What's your name?"

"Jemmy Atkins," said the boy.

"Take that to your mother," cried Jones, and flinging the boy the guinea, our landlord turned his horse round, and galloped back to the Hall.—"Well, Mr. Mattocks——"

"Yes, Sir," observed the steward, at the door, as the 'Squire dismounted.

"In my study, Mr. Mattocks." The steward followed his master, who looked pale, and trembled as he tried to speak.

"What has happened, Sir?" asked the steward, anxiously.

"Murder has happened, Sir! Do you know a man named Atkins? that man was wounded in my grounds last night."

"I heard there had been a scuffle, Sir," said Mattocks.

"A scuffle, Sir! And do you suppose, Sir, that I will have blood shed? What do you take me for, Mr. Mattocks?"

"Really, Sir—I—permit me, with deference, Sir, to ask you two questions?"

"Go on, Sir—go on; twenty—but go on," said Jones, scarcely suppressing his wrath.

"Did you not give orders that men should patrol the preserves?" asked Mattocks.

"I did, Sir," said Jones.

"And did you not order the men to be armed?" asked Mattocks.

"Granted," said Jones.

"Well, Sir!" cried Mattocks, "am I to blame?"

"Certainly—most certainly. I own I ordered the men to be stationed there—I ordered them to be armed; but, Sir, I —I didn't order them to use their arms. I thought, naturally enough, every reasonable person would have thought so, that putting weapons in their hands would be going quite far enough."

"I don't believe, by what I have heard, that the mischief is very great," said the steward.

"I hope not—I hope not. See—but don't let it be known —that the man's attended to; and, hark ye, Mr. Mattocks, let the keeper discharge all his followers."

"And ar'n't the man-traps to be kept set, Sir?"

"Kept set!" exclaimed Jones, in astonishment—"what! have they been set at all?"

"Carefully set, Sir," answered the steward.

"Mr. Mattocks, I'll have no such doings on my estate, Sir. It's all very well that the boards should remain; but, on second thoughts, I think that's going quite far enough."

"And then the mastiffs, Sir?"

"They can't bite—and they *may* frighten trespassers," said Jones.

"Can't bite, Sir!" cried the astonished steward. "Why not, Sir?"

"Why not? Because, of course, you muzzled them. The look of the dogs will be found quite sufficient—yes, that will be going quite far enough."

But the mischief was done; and Jones, despite his pacific intentions, had for ever forfeited the confidence of his dependants. He took refuge in Parliament from the weariness of rustic life, and, to his own astonishment, distinguished himself as a very eloquent member. At a dissolution he again presented himself to his constituents, who, with little ceremony, rejected him.

The disappointment was too much for Jones: he was mortally wounded by the ingratitude of man. He pined, and pined, and died a rejected member.

"Ha, Doctor!" he would say, "I don't know who would serve his country. You see how I have been treated! Rejected for—but no matter. And yet I should like to know what complaint they *could* have against me?"

"Why, I—I have heard, 'Squire, that they charge you with inconsistency."

"Inconsistency!" cried Jones.

"Yes, on the—the——Bill," said the doctor.

"Why, I spoke and voted for it on the first reading, didn't I?"

"You did."

"And on the second?"

"Assuredly; but then you spoke and voted against it on the third."

"I confess it; for," exclaimed the dying patriot, "I thought I had gone quite far enough."

Jones was never married, yet have we heard it stoutly maintained that he has had sons and grandsons in all parliaments downwards.

III. Robinson, who could swim "anywhere."

CHAPTER I.

Having disposed of Brown and Jones, our concluding duty is to narrate the history of the accomplished Robinson—of Robinson, who could swim "anywhere over the river."

School-birch—dead twigs though it seems—buds and bears fruit. The child feels only the branches; but how often is the produce ashes in the mouth of manhood! Let us, however, turn to the words of the wise and meek-hearted Mr. Daniel Fenning, to the page of that immortal book, which, still green in its twenty-thousandth edition, teaches sweet morality to tens of thousands of the present generation.

"Now, Robinson," (says Mr. Daniel Fenning — and we quote from the amended edition of 1837) "could swim very well; and thought, as Brown and Jones were whipt, *because they could not swim*, that he should escape.

"'Well, Robinson' said the master, 'can you swim?'

"'Yes, Sir,' said he (very boldly) 'anywhere over the river.'

"'You *can* swim, you say?'

"'Yes, Sir.'

"'Then pray, Sir, if you can swim so well, *what business had you in the water*, when you should have been at school? You don't want to learn to swim, you say? It is plain, then, you go in for idleness' sake. Take him up—take him up,' said he."

Robinson "could swim anywhere;" he was therefore to remain content with the knowledge of his ability. Why should he ever exercise a power once perfectly acquired?

Despite the discipline of his master, Robinson left school with an enviable reputation. Who so clever as Jack Robinson? Though he carried off no prize-medal, his schoolfellows protested, that had he so minded, he might have secured every distinction. He would, with careless ease, give many a secret lift in Greek and mathematics to plodding dullness, that, by his means, would start off with the contested glory.

"Why, Robinson," a schoolboy friend would say, "why didn't you get the prize yourself? You know you might if you had liked."

"I know that," Robinson would answer, "I know that;"

and throughout life Robinson rested satisfied with the barren knowledge. To be once able to do a thing to perfection, were with Robinson a sufficient reason for never again attempting it.

Our hero grew up a handsome, free-hearted lad. Esteemed by the men, and admired by the women, Jack Robinson was everywhere at home; and oh! the fortune, the worldly distinction that grave, wise folk would predict for Jack Robinson.

Peter Creeply was one of many cousins to Jack. "He was a poor mouse of a fellow, and would live and die in a corner." So did the wiseacres prophesy of Peter Creeply. There was scarcely a month's difference in their age,—when both Jack and Peter, in their one-and-twentieth year, were guests of their uncle, Squire Chaffton, whose superficial knowledge of human nature was, in the opinion of his most intimate friends, more than remedied by his exquisite taste in horse-flesh—if he had studied little of men, he had pondered much on fillies. How very different was Squire Chaffton, the oracle of the stables, to Giaffir Chaffton, his brother, the profound orientalist —the man of many Eastern tongues.

Squire Chaffton had, at a high price, secured a pure Arabian. The creature was shipped to England, with an attested pedigree, which proved the animal to be descended from the favourite horse of "good Haroun Alraschid." This superb creature the Squire destined as a birth-day present to his only daughter, who, after the stud, came in for all her father's affection. The filly was a present for a queen—there was not such another in the whole kingdom. The filly, however, had one frailty: its blood was as pure as the blood of the Ptolemies —its shape was faultless: with wings at its back, it would have beaten Pegasus: St. George must have sat such a horse when he speared the dragon. Yet, with all the virtues of birth and beauty, the filly had the trifling disadvantage of a wild and wayward temper. To attempt to break it, was to endeavour to tie up a fire. The eldest groom shook his head, looking hopeless looks at the beautiful Arabian.

"Great pity, Sir — as we used to say of the Marchioness — great pity, Sir, that good looks and good manners do not always go together."

Thus spoke Bob Spurling, in a melancholy tone, staring at the filly, and then at the Squire.

"She's very handsome, Bob," said the Squire, still rapt with his purchase.

"Just what the Marquis used to say, Sir, when he paid the jeweller's bill. Very handsome, Sir, but such a price!"

"She's thorough-bred—all blood," exclaimed the Squire.

"All blood, Sir, and a little brimstone,—just like the Marchioness," observed that eminent groom, Mr. Robert Spurling.

"Cost me a bank of money, Bob," cried the Squire. "A lovely thing!"

"I'd let her out to sign-painters, Sir—she's too handsome to ride," remarked the satirical Spurling.

"Don't you think it possible to break her, Bob?" asked the Squire, despondingly.

"Why, look you here, Sir; when an animal has what I call original vice—that is, Sir, vice it can't help—it's no use doing nothing with it. Breaking's no good—we can only pity it; and that's exactly what I once said of the Marchioness."

"Marchioness, psha! I tell you the filly cost me a thousand pounds."

"Never be worth her beans," answered the groom: "no more was the——"

"She *shall* be broken," exclaimed the Squire, with vehemence; "so talk no more about it."

"Well, Sir, it all depends upon whom you want her for—there's a good many folks we wouldn't mind risking upon her."

"Want her for?—why for Lucy. Who do you think I bought her for?"

"What! for your Miss Lucy, Sir? Ha, Squire, it would be entirely child-murder!" said Bob Spurling, very gravely, and walked away.

Lucy Chaffton was a pretty, delicate girl of eighteen, who had quietly fallen in love with the gay, good-tempered, clever Robinson—he all the while as ignorant of the matter as the Arabian filly itself. "Pretty creature—very pretty creature," Robinson would say, and sometimes add, "make a man very happy, that girl—yes, nice, modest, quiet thing—make a man very happy." Though when Robinson said this he had little suspicion that he himself was the man Lucy would have chosen above all others with whom to have shared happiness. "A sweet little creature! Egad! I'd ride round the world on an errand for her," said Robinson, one day, as Lucy, having presented him with a purse of her own knitting, tripped, blushing and confused, from the garden to the house. Now this little incident took place about the same time that the squire and the groom were engaged in the above colloquy on the merits and the vices of the Arabian filly.

"Well, Robert, what's the news at the stables?" asked Robinson of the groom, who had just quitted the dissatisfied Squire.

"Very bad, Sir; haven't you seen the foreigner—the 'rabian—such a sweet thing, Sir?" said Robert.

"What's the matter with it—dead?" inquired Robinson.

"Quite the contrary—got too much life, Sir, as my master used to say of the Marchioness,"—Robert availing himself of every possible opportunity to speak of the noble family whose wages he had once received.

"What's her vice?" asked Robinson.

"Why, Sir, this is it—as long as you keep a bit out of her mouth, or a hand from her back, she is the loveliest thing—I will say it, whether standing, lying, trotting, galloping, or only at the rack—she is the loveliest thing as ever wore a tail. For a wild un nothin' can beat her."

"Who rides her?" asked Robinson.

"Who! That's it, Sir—nothin' but the flies have ever kept a minute on her," answered Spurling.

"O, indeed! Well, I've a month on my hands, I must have a look at her;" and Robinson turned carelessly away, and strolled towards the stables.

"You can't think, Peter," said the Squire, "how much that filly grieves me. Such a beautiful animal—such a figure—and yet so vicious."

"Ha! uncle," replied Peter, demurely, "how often do we see the same thing with men and women."

"That's of less consequence, Peter: but with our Arabian filly, that has cost so much—it's shocking," moaned the Squire.

"Are there no hopes of her?" asked Peter.

"None, the jade! I tell you what, Peter—I bought her for Lucy—cost me a world of money—I tell you what, Peter, I'll try your spirit now: break the filly and have her," said Chaffton—"I'm tired of her."

Peter Creeply would have been delighted with the gift, if not burthened with the dangerous proviso. "You see, uncle—I—the fact is, I—I am an only son, as you know, and if anything were to happen to me—I——"

"Then you won't mount the filly? You won't have her? Come, yes or no," cried the Squire, doggedly.

"Yes, uncle, yes," exclaimed Peter Creeply; and then he felt death-sick at his sudden imprudence. It would have been a great loss to give up the filly, and yet, if he should break his neck!

"Saddle the filly," was the order of the Squire, who had walked to the stables; Peter following him, as if with naked feet he walked on broken glass.

"For Mr. Creeply, Sir?" asked a stable-boy.

"Ye—es," answered Peter Creeply, and he shivered. At the moment the filly was led, bridled and saddled, from the stable, Robinson came up.

"Will you ride her—eh, Jack?" asked the Squire.

"Ha, Jack!"—and Peter spied hope—"will you back her?"

"Not I," said Jack Robinson—"not I, indeed!"

"Well, I thought he had more spirit than Peter," muttered the Squire; and Creeply, trembling from head to heel, mounted the filly, Robinson standing at her head and patting her. "He sits her remarkably well," thought the Squire—"very well." And although the mare plunged a little, Peter, to his own astonishment, easily mastered her. "Bravo, Peter! There now, if you ride her ten miles out and in without a throw, she's yours, Peter." And Creeply rode away, and in less than two hours was home again, having, as he said, made the filly quiet as a lamb.

"Well, then," said the Squire, "she's yours, Peter—you've tamed her, and take her."

"No, Sir, no: do not think I ventured for myself—no, Sir, 'twas for Lucy," and the young lady being present, as Peter rode to the door, he leapt from the saddle, and with all the grace he was master of, in a moment, placed the bridle on her unwilling arm.

"A lad of true spirit—a fine fellow," thought Chaffton; and then aloud to the fortunate equestrian, "Peter, you sha'n't lose by the gift, depend on't."

"You have a beautiful present, Lucy," said Robinson.

"Yes; Mr. Creeply is—is very kind," and Lucy made a slight curtsey, and hurried into the house.

"A charming girl!" sighed Robinson; "but it's no use to grieve at it—yes, Peter's a lucky fellow!"

"He shall have her—Peter's the man for Lucy," determined the Squire; and that very evening wrote a letter to Mrs. Creeply, proposing the match, instantly leapt at by the provident widow.

"In three weeks Peter will be of age; he shall be married on the very day."

The Squire was peremptory—poor Lucy was timid—Jack Robinson was melancholy and silent; a week before the ceremony feigned an excuse for his absence—an excuse readily

accepted by the Squire—and in three weeks Lucy Chaffton became Mrs. Peter Creeply.

About two months after the marriage, Robinson was compelled by a family matter to visit the Squire, who, the next day, proposed a ride. "Come," said the old man, "you shall see Lucy on Fatima—she's tame and docile as a spaniel."

The horses were ordered to be saddled; the beautiful Arabian, Fatima, was led to the door. Peter Creeply was about to help his lady to her horse, when Robinson cried out—"Stop, Peter! I'd forgotten to tell you, Lucy need'nt take the trouble to climb up. Here, Fat"—and Robinson patted the animal, that with its head and neck returned the caress, —"down, down;" and the filly bent, obedient, as a camel, to receive its load.

"Why—eh—Jack, who taught her that trick?" asked the astonished Squire.

"She's a good, gentle thing, and can be made to do anything," answered Robinson.

"Well, but what did you know of ——"

"O! after two or three mornings, Fatima and I were very good friends;" and again Robinson patted the filly, that again acknowledged his hand, whilst Lucy hastily held the veil that the wind was blowing over her hat, close to her face.

"What! you don't mean to say Jack, that you ever rode Fatima?"

"Yes, Sir, he did, but he bound me in honour never to tell you; but now, as how Mr. Robinson's half-owned it himself——" and Bob Spurling was proceeding, when he was checked by the Squire.

"Then, you rode her before Peter took her in hand?" asked Chaffton.

"How very odd that was!" said Peter, "and that I should never have known it!"

"Why, then," said the Squire, a little recovered from his astonishment, as he rode by the side of our hero; "why,

then, Jack, you yourself might, if you had liked, possessed the filly."

"I know that, uncle—I know that," said Jack Robinson.

"Do you see that, Dick?" said Robert Spurling to a helper of the stables, and pointing to the party as they turned the lane; "do you see that? Now, that's what I reg'larly call a pictur o' life."

"What's the matter, Bob?" asked the helper.

"Matter," said Robert Spurling with a sigh; ha Dick! in this world, it isn't him as breaks the horse, as is always doomed to win the plate."

CHAPTER II.

It was still the tantalizing fortune of Jack Robinson to secure the praise of everybody, his cousin the Creeplys, by some chance or other, always obtaining the solid pudding. Ere Jack was thirty, he was an universal favourite, and not worth sixpence—whilst his cousins obtained only that sort of respect to be purchased with ready money; but having the wherewithal to buy, the market was never found deficient. Men buttoned up their pockets, and declared Robinson to be the best of fellows. It was very odd, though, that with all his talents, with all his spirit, he seemed merely to lounge in the footpath of life, whilst the Creeplys made their regular journeys to the Bank. Jack made capital jests the while, but the Creeplys made what the dull multitude agree to consider a much better thing.

"Ha! Jack," said Mr. Giaffir Creeply, "if you had but followed the Persian proverb, that says——"

"True, Sir; no doubt—but as I don't read Persian," replied Robinson, "and as I moreover hate proverbs, and think them mere counters for simpletons to play with——"

"Simpletons, Mr. Robinson! A dozen proverbs, Sir, may contain the wisdom of a life," answered Mr. Giaffir Creeply.

"Yes, Sir; but then, like the superb set of fish that my aunt brings out at loo, though the workmanship be very costly, the application may be very foolish."

"Ha! Jack—if you would but study Persian, you don't know the jewels that are locked up in it. If you could but understand the divine Saadi!"

"Ha! humph! Well, I'm told he's worth looking into. I'll see about it, uncle," and ere Jack slept he had resolved to set himself vigorously to work upon the task. In a couple of years, Robinson could have conversed on things in general with the Shah, in his own tongue. "Hang this lingo!" cried Xerxes, the son of Giaffir Creeply, in a confidential hour, to Jack Robinson—"why won't good wholesome English do for him? Would you think it, Jack, my prig of a father wants his epitaph in Persian? The fact is, I've sworn to him for the last eighteen months, that I have been studying my head off at the cursed language—and I don't know a word of it. As for writing the character, I could as soon make a cobweb. And yet it's his whim to have his epitaph in Orientals! Why the deuce won't a good serviceable *hic jacet* do for him?"

"An odd thing for you to write upon your living father;" said Robinson.

"Odd! devilish odd! the fact is, I—yes—I have it, I shall tell him my felings won't let me," said the filial Xerxes, who then mournfully added, "that won't do neither: if I refuse the Persian epitaph, he'll make me write my letter for my next quarter's allowance in his filthy Eastern jargon."

"Now, the epitaph would be shorter," observed Robinson.

"Yes—I—I should very much prefer that," replied young Creeply, "but, unfortunately, I can't even do his epitaph. My dear Jack, you can't direct me to any scoundrel who knows the language, eh? 'cause, by gad! the old fellow must have it somehow," and Xerxes, with his gold-mounted stick, emphatically rapped his boot.

"What can be said of him, eh?" inquired Robinson.

"O! short—short, but sugary: just to touch upon the virtues that people who can afford a tombstone always have. But, who—who's to do it, Jack?" asked Xerxes, with much anxiety.

"I'll have it done for you," said Robinson,—"I know a poor devil of a fellow, who'll be at my lodgings after dinner; I'll give him the chief points, and as I shall be at uncle's in the evening, I'll bring it with me."

"Well! everybody says it, and I *do* think it—you are the best of fellows. Pity you have'n't money—shame you ar'n't rich; but you *are* a good fellow for all that. Don't fail, now. Mind; let all the household virtues—the faithful husband—'loving father,' 'tried friend,' and all that, be nicely mulled up with a little eastern spice," said Xerxes Creeply, speaking of his father's epitaph as if he were ordering a cup of sack of a drawer.

Robinson was true to his promise. In the evening he presented himself at the house of his uncle, who had that day accomplished his sixtieth year; and being a hale hearty man, amused himself by playing off the small stoic, by requiring his son, on that day above all others, to write the paternal epitaph. Mr. Creeply was one of those philosophers who despise death so heartily, that they take every opportunity of protesting their contempt of it. "It was a proper thing," he would say, "for a man to walk through this world, with his coffin perpetually in his eye. Every man should have his epitaph over his mantelpiece; if it touched upon good qualities he did not possess, the satire might shame him into them."

"Only, my dear Giaffir," observed Mrs. Creeply, "as you insist upon having yours in an eastern tongue, nobody but yourself can tell whether you'll be shamed or not."

"Depend upon me, dear Madam, for a severe translation," said Mr. Shaster, a celebrated orientalist, and friend of the family.

"Jack—Jack," said young Xerxes, in a whisper to Robinson, "is it done?"

"Here it is," replied Robinson, giving a paper behind him to young Creeply.

"I say, Jack, no tricks, now?" said Xerxes, advancing a little, and looking suspiciously at his cousin.

"Honour," said Robinson, "it's an epitaph for a man of twenty thousand a-year."

"But where—where is the document?" asked Mr. Shaster. "Have you done it, Xerxes? For I can tell you, more depends upon it than you think."

Young Creeply, with an assured air, presented the paper to his father, who shook him by the hand. His mother smiled, and one young lady, an eastern heiress, declared to her next friend that "Xerxes had quite the look of a profound scholar."

Everybody, save Jack Robinson, seemed to think it a serious moment; but we regret to state that our hero, possibly because he was already acquainted with the contents of the paper, instead of listening to them, gave his entire attention to a pet spaniel, which, for all the pride of its blood and birth, he insisted upon teaching "to beg;" and what is most strange, had the dog been of the lowest plebeian origin, it could not have shewn itself a more ready-witted scholar.

"Perhaps, Shaster, you will glance your eye over it for errors, and then favour the ladies with a translation?" said Mr. Giaffir Creeply.

The orientalist took the document, perused it to himself, and then, to the delight of Xerxes, smiled upon him, and said, "Very well, indeed."

"I'm charmed to hear it—charmed to hear it—a good boy, Xerxes—an excellent boy!" exclaimed the father. "Now, Shaster, the translation."

Mr. Shaster coughed thrice, and then proceeded to translate Persian into English:—

"'*In memory of Giaffir Creepley, who*——'"

"I beg your pardon, Shaster, but you say Giaffir Creeply simply—has the boy omitted the 'F.A.S.?'" inquired the philosopher. "Never mind—it can be added when engrossed."

Shaster proceeded—"'*Who fell asleep on the*——'

"Only 'asleep!'" exclaimed Mrs. Creeply.

"That, Madam," said Shaster, "is an oriental synonym for 'who died.'"

"I see—I beg your pardon," replied the satisfied wife. "Quite correct. 'Who died.' And then of course there is a blank."

"Let us hope, Madam, a very long blank," added Shaster, who continued the epitaph. "'*He was faithful to his spouse, as the bulbul to the rose.*'"

At this, Mrs. Creeply shifted herself in her chair, looked direct at her husband, who had accidentally turned his head quite another way. Mrs. Creeply coughed.

"'*He was faithful to his*——' Shaster was about to repeat, when Mrs. Creeply abruptly observed—

"You've read that once."

Shaster bowed and proceeded. "'*His friendship was like the Nile*'—its source not yet come at," muttered the reader.

"Does n't the Nile abound with alligators?" asked an innocent young lady.

"Yes, child," replied Shaster; "but that can't be the simile. Can it, Xerxes?"

"No—no, Sir," replied young Creeply, fearful of the erratic spirit of Robinson.

"You had better read on," observed Giaffir Creeply, with some coldness.

Shaster obeyed. "'*His friendship was like the Nile. It teemed with good gifts to all men, yet took no account of them.*'" Shaster looked straight at old Creeply, who, with enviable presence of mind, remarked, "very prettily turned—very poetical." The reader continued. "'*His children grew like palm-trees.*'"

"Walnut-trees would have been better," mumbled Xerxes, shrugging his shoulders at boyish recollections.

"'*Goodly and fruitful. The grave of the just is as a coffer of spices. Such is the grave of Giaffir.*'"

"Plenty of cayenne there," thought young Creeply, who endeavoured to cast a thanksgiving look at Jack Robinson, at the time giving his undivided attention to Fairy, patiently seated upon its haunches, and winking resignedly in the face of its instructor.

"Beautiful," "beautiful," murmured everybody, "and so true," added more than one benevolent person.

"Very beautiful," said Mr. Creeply, sen., approaching the corner where Robinson, rapt in his employments, sat. "Capitally done."

"Yes," cried Jack, thoughtless of the epitaph, and all his mind given to Fairy, "begs like a Christian, doesn't she?"

"Mr. Robinson!" exclaimed Giaffir Creeply, in a loud voice.

"Hallo!" answered Jack Robinson; "what's the matter?"

"I did think, Sir, though I never counted extravagantly upon your affection—your respect, I mean—I did think that on my birth-day, and on so solemn an occasion as—yes, I did think that I might have come in for at least a share of your attention, with a dog."

"To be sure, why not?" asked the ingenuous Robinson.

"When my epitaph was read, Sir—yes, my epitaph—and none of us, no, not even the youngest and the healthiest know how soon they may require it, Mr. Robinson," and Giaffir became almost pathetic.

"Well, what have I done? I promised to teach Fairy to beg, and—and how did you know, uncle, that I couldn't do that and pay every attention to your epitaph, too?" inquired Jack. "Greatest respect for you in the world, uncle," said Jack, at the same time menacing with his forefinger the mendicant spaniel still erect upon the table.

The stoical Giaffir Creeply made no reply; but, glancing at

the object of Jack's attention, he caught the spaniel by the neck, and flung it to a distant end of the room. Mrs. Creeply and her eldest daughter screamed and ran to the yelping pet, whilst Mr. Creeply looked at Jack Robinson's neck, as if it would have afforded him a peculiar gratification to send its owner after his suffering pupil.

"I'm ashamed of you, Mr. Creeply," cried Giaffir's wife, with Fairy in her arms.

"I couldn't have thought it of you, Pa," said Giaffir's eldest daughter. "I'm sure it wasn't her fault."

"But persons—persons without talent or application," and Mr. Creeply tried to look through Jack Robinson, "delight to interrupt the triumphs of genius. Look here, Sir—look here!" and Creeply exhibited the epitaph in Persian.

"Ha!" and Jack Robinson took the paper, all eyes attracted by the coolness of his manner. "Ha! very pretty!"

"No doubt," replied old Creeply, with withering sarcasm, "if you could read it."

"Two or three characters here not perfectly finished;" and to the astonishment of his uncle and Shaster, Jack took a pen, and made the necessary additions.

"O! what — do you know the character?" observed Creeply.

"Think I do: good night, uncle—good night, aunt: mind —don't let Fairy have her biscuit till she asks properly for it," and without more words, Jack Robinson left the house of uncle Creeply never more to return to it.

"He has no soul to comprehend the beauties of such a composition," said Miss Tamarisk, the oriental heiress, afterwards married to Xerxes Creeply, her father's consent being obtained by the young man's reputation for Persian. Nay, more; had he so pleased, Xerxes might have held a very important situation in an embassy to Ispahan, at the recommendation of Mr. Shaster, who spoke of him as a person peculiarly fitted for the honour by his knowledge of the language, with his poetical power in the use of it.

It was very strange, however, that Xerxes obstinately refused to search out the hidden beauties of the strains of Saadi; it was—as Mr. Giaffir Creeply would frequently say—quite unaccountable. As for Jack Robinson, it was plain he knew nothing more than the character; or he would have answered the letter written in Persian to him by his forgiving uncle, touched as he was by the rumour of his nephew's desperate fortune.

That letter found Jack in an obscure nook of a lodging. He read it—flung it down. "Why should I trouble myself to please his whims? I could abuse him, if I would, in the slang of a Persian water-carrier: but d—n Persian—I 'll give it him in good English;" and Jack's English answer to the oriental missive closed the correspondence between himself and uncle.

"I knew—I knew all he did was a flourish! Correct the character, indeed!" cried Giaffir Creeply; "but no matter; never again does he cross my threshold."

"But, seriously, Mr. Creeply," said his wife, "you never intend to adopt that epitaph?"

"'Twill be beautifully written on parchment—after the eastern fashion," answered Giaffir.

"What! with all that fulsome praise?" asked Mrs. Creeply.

"I see nothing fulsome in it," replied her stoical mate.

"Well—thank Heaven!—if you intend to hang it on your walls, nobody but yourself can read it."

"Yes, Madam, but I am not one of those who like to keep knowledge to myself—I shall subjoin a translation to it."

"Mr. Giaffir Creeply, I am sorry I must say—you are a fool."

"Mrs. Giaffir Creeply, it occasions me very much distress to reflect that you are the fool's wife."

On the day that Jack Robinson was warned from his unpaid lodging, the epitaph (without the translation), duly emblazoned, ornamented the dining-room of Giaffir Creeply.

CHAPTER III.

Jack was blessed with a great number of relatives; all easy with the world and with themselves. It was therefore not to be wondered at, that Jack Robinson was looked upon as a scapegrace by the respectable persons of his own blood. Everybody, save his aunt Priscilla, gave him up. "Poor lad!" the maiden would charitably exclaim, "poor lad! he's wild—but he means well."

"Means well! Why does n't he go abroad, and not disgrace us?" asked aunt Deborah. "I'm told that the fellow really wants a dinner."

"He might, if he will be such a libertine, spare the family and conceal his name," said aunt Bridget, who, sensitive as she was, might have endured the anonymous starvation of her nephew.

"And he might have done so well, too!" cried aunt Deborah. "Look—only look at Peter and Xerxes," for ever and anon the prosperity of his two respectable cousins was flung in the hungry teeth of Jack Robinson. "You may do as you like, but I shall not go to Twickenham if Jack's of the party." Such was the determination of aunt Deborah. That severe spinster, however, suffered herself to be mollified into consent, and Robinson was permitted to mingle among a dozen of his aunts, uncles, and cousins, in an aquatic excursion up the Thames, to visit Mr. Pope's villa.

The day was beautiful—even Deborah was in tolerably good temper—and everything promised a most delightful excursion.

"John, you know 'Pope's Essay on Man.' If you would but recite some of it—I recollect you spoke it once at the holidays."

"I know I did, aunt; once is enough, is n't it? asked Jack of aunt Priscilla; and he turned to talk to a blue-eyed cousin, until that day unnoticed by our hero.

"You are very gallant, Mr. Robinson," observed aunt

Priscilla, with wounded dignity, taking out a very handsome gold box.

"Bless me! Miss Robinson," said a new female friend, "that's a beautiful box."

"Hush, child!" cried Priscilla, and then in a still lower voice, and with little preface, the elderly maiden proceeded to tell the history of the treasure. "Ha! my dear—you can't think how I value this box. It was given to me—but no matter for names—we were to have been married, child, but before that could happen, he died, dear youth! upon the bed of glory."

"Dreadful disappointment!" said the sympathising listener.

"Yes, my dear; he gave it me when we parted, and placing it in my hand, he said—ha!" and aunt Priscilla shrieked loud enough to raise Father Thames from the bottom.

"What's the matter?" was the general shout.

"My box—my box!" screamed aunt Priscilla, and wrung her empty hands above the river. The truth is, aunt Deborah —she was the heaviest of a very heavy family—was seated next to Priscilla, and turning suddenly round, her arm striking the hand of the possessor of the box, at that time more intent upon its history than its preservation, jerked the valuable love-gift into the water.

"What's to be done?" cried every uncle, every aunt, and every cousin, save aunt Priscilla, who was speechless, and cousin Jack, who whistled.

"John—John Robinson—you—you can dive?" exclaimed Deborah, very significantly.

"Better drag for it," said Robinson, with, as all the aunts declared, "the most brutal unconcern."

"But—you know, Mr. Robinson, that you are a very expert swimmer. I'm sure you can get the box," cried aunt Bridget.

"'Tis n't worth a guinea," said Robinson.

"Don't talk to me of its worth, Sir!" exclaimed aunt Priscilla, with considerable indignation; and then, throwing her

arms round the neck of her friend, she sobbed—"I had rather lost half I 'm possessed of."

Aunt Priscilla resolved to land, and to offer any reward for the recovery of her property. Peter Creeply, who was of the party, begged that his aunt would leave the business entirely to him—he would forfeit her love for ever, if he did not bring her back the box. The lady, comforted by the confident manner of her nephew, blessed him, and bade him use his best discretion. The party landed, when Jack Robinson fell in with a couple of town friends, and—the vivacity of his own party being extinguished, everybody looking sorrowful in compliment to the loss of Priscilla—he resolved to dine with his new companions. "I should only be in your way," said Jack, as he walked up, "for, upon my word, try as hard as I can, I can't weep for a snuff-box; and it's a pity to spoil company, when everybody else is of one mind. I say, Peter, do you hear nothing? Hark!"

"Hark, Mr. Robinson! To what?"

"There, again," said Jack Robinson; "the fishes! how they do sneeze to be sure!" Thus spoke Jack, to the great disgust of many of his dearest relatives, and lounged off between his London comrades, to take, as had been stipulated, "a reasonable glass."

There are, doubtless, critical stages in the life of man and woman, when any undue agitation of the spirits may have the most fatal effects on the tenement of clay. We will not positively assert that it is so, but trust that the choleric will, for their own sake, if not out of regard to the quiet of others, believe it to be very possible. Now, whether the temporary loss of Miss Priscilla's box—for we may at once state that it was in a few hours restored to her—chained as that box was to the dearest fibres of her heart, and then, by violent disruption, cast away—opened wounds, not well healed, and never again to close—or whether her time was nearly done, and the separation of the gold snuff-box had nothing whatever

to do with the tragedy that followed—we leave to higher wits to decide. It is, however, a part of our task to inform the reader that aunt Priscilla sickened, and in one month after her trip to Twickenham died.

"You must get something, now, Jack; you were her favourite," said young Corkton, a bottle friend of Jack's.

"Poor old girl!" said Jack. "I think she was the only one of them who cared about me. And I didn't use her well —I was n't as attentive as I might have been. Poor old Priscilla!"

"Death must come, Jack. He 's an ugly fellow, to be sure; but when the skull and cross-bones are well gilt, they 're not so bad. I suppose, now, you 'll keep your hunters and pack? Egad! you 're a lucky fellow—there 's such a bargain in the way of hounds."

"We shall see, Tom," said Robinson; who in due time was summoned to the funeral: and the ceremony over, to the reading of aunt Priscilla's will. Jack Robinson found himself down for ten thousand pounds. "Excellent aunt!" ejaculated Robinson, about to weep at the benevolence of the deceased, when he was desired to attend to the reading of a codicil, that transferred the ten thousand pounds to John Robinson, to "my beloved nephew Peter Creeply, together with my gold snuff-box, in token of his courageous recovery of the same."

"So, Peter," said Jack Robinson, meeting him a week afterwards, "so, Peter, I wish you joy of your fortune—did n't know you could swim. 'T was all my own fault; you attended to the wishes of the old lady, and I — well. I deserve my loss. But I did n't know you could dive!"

"Dive, Jack! not I; dive! not a bit of it."

"Why, does n't the will say as much? 'Courageous conduct' —how did you get the box? For my part, you know, I went away with Corkton and Springley, and we got *so* drunk! But how did it happen?"

"I think—for she was n't quite herself, poor woman—that

my dear aunt believed I had risked my life to fish up her box. Not I, Jack, depend on't," and Peter, assured of the ten thousand pounds, could afford to be candid. "The truth is, it struck me that it was possible, when the tide went down, that the box might be found in the mud. So keeping my thoughts to myself, and persuading my aunt to depend entirely upon me—ha! ha!—whilst you were with Corkton and Springley, I went at night and sat on the bank of the river."

"I see—and while, like a fool, I was laughing and swallowing wine——"

"I was watching the going down of the tide," answered Peter, and he grinned at the recollection of his cunning.

"Well, I was a fool," exclaimed Jack Robinson—"I was a fool! I could have dived and brought up the box; I was a fool!"

Pity it is that those fitted to seize a treasure from any depth should leave it unregarded, a prize for the patient lookers out who can do nothing more than watch the "going down of the tide."

CHAPTER IV.

Jack Robinson was now without a friend. It was not enough that he had forfeited the intended legacy of aunt Priscilla, but he lost with the ten thousand pounds the little credit he had with his relations; whilst Peter Creeply, from the moment the tenor of the maiden's will was known, rose in the estimation of all the world. There never was such a graceless good-for-nothing as Jack Robinson! There could not be a finer gentleman or a better man than Peter Creeply.

Poor Robinson, the victim of early impressions, capable of doing twenty things better than seven-tenths of his fellows, did nothing for that very reason. He sank in reputation, health, and spirits; and at forty, behold Jack Robinson in a garret, when, with the fair use of his talents and moderate fortune to

back them, the same Jack Robinson might have been the lord of a rich manor—the useful member for the borough.

"Mr. Robinson, Mr. Robinson," cried his landlady, stealing unheard by him into his wretched attic, where Jack sat, with his head in his hand, staring at an empty grate.

"Oh! what's the matter, Mrs. Carey?" asked Robinson.

"Do you know, the very thing has happened that will suit you. You said, last Friday, you should like to get a school. Now, this morning, the parish schoolmaster died. A comfortable place, Sir, for them as likes the business: house, coals, candles, and I don't know what salary," said the landlady.

"I 'll see about it immediately, Mrs. Carey," said Robinson, starting up and taking his hat.

"Stay, Mr. Robinson; I tell you what has come into my head. There 's Mr. Quick, the whip-maker, a kind soul—my boy will shew you where he lives—go to him, he 's overseer, vestryman, and a great person in the parish. Get his interest, and I 'm bound for it you have the place. Here, Jemmy," and Mrs. Carey desired her boy to see Mr. Robinson to Mr. Quick's, the whip-maker.

In a few minutes the child pointed out the door of the vestryman, and returned home. Robinson paused a moment, and was about to go into the shop, when a gentleman passed him, and was about to enter: their eyes met, and for a moment they stared at each other.

"Surely," said the gentleman, "your name is—is Robinson?"

"And surely," said Jack, "I see my old schoolfellow, Brown?"

"How odd that we should meet after so many years," said Brown. "But come in, I lodge with Mr. Quick."

"That's strange! I had something to ask of him," said Robinson.

"Out of town, and won't return until to-morrow. Come in; stay, Jack, we shall be more comfortable at a coffee-house—

come along," and the schoolfellows took their way to a neighbouring house, where Brown played the host. "And how have you been, Jack? Though not rich yourself, you had an army of rich friends: I hope they 've not left you poor, eh?" and Brown unconsciously glanced at the whitened edges of Robinson's coat.

"No—no—I ought to be rich—but I blame no one," said Robinson. "However, to my business—you can serve me, Brown."

"I shall be delighted to do it, Robinson," and Brown pledged his schoolfellow. "Come, drink; you shall have as much wine as you can swim in. Ha! talking of swimming, have you ever met with Jones? Do you recollect the flogging our master—wonder if he 's dead yet—gave us three? Poor Smith! he 'd have made a bright man! Pretty boy he was, you recollect—I see him now, just as he was picked out of the water—poor Smith! But you say I can serve you—speak, my boy."

"Have you any interest with Mr. Quick?" asked Robinson.

"Do anything in the world for me," answered Brown.

"I understand he has great influence in the vestry; the appointment of the new schoolmaster rests with that body. I —I"—Robinson felt his cheeks creep with blushes—"I think you can answer for my capability—will you ask Mr. Quick to stir himself in my behalf? It is of consequence to me, Brown," said Robinson stammeringly.

Brown looked confused—thoughtful. He drew himself up to his schoolmate, and laid his hand on Robinson's knee. "My good fellow, for old times, I should be most happy to serve you—I should indeed, John; but the truth is, I never in all my life asked a favour of Quick, and as I never did ask, I—you see—I"—and Brown with dropped jaw, stared at Robinson.

"Say no more—I beg your pardon," said Robinson, and he rose, and, incapable of self-control, rushed into the

street, leaving Brown (who "could n't swim") bewildered and ashamed.

The next day, Robinson called at Quick's house, and learned that he had not yet arrived from the borough of ——, where he had a vote, which he had journeyed to give to Squire Jones, of Homepickle Hall. The election, however, was over, and the next day Mr. Quick would be at home.

"Jones — Squire Jones — of Homepickle Hall," mused Robinson; and as the member was confined by a political fit of the gout to London, Robinson was resolved to wait upon him, for he recognised his old schoolfellow in the new-made senator. "It 's hard, indeed, if I don't find him a little warmer than that nincompoop, Brown," thought Robinson, as he knocked at the door, and prayed an audience of the squire.

We pass the meeting of the schoolfellows—the protestations of service on the part of Jones. "He would immediately see his friendly constituent, Quick, and secure the office of pedagogue for Jack Robinson; Jack might rely upon it."

Before the election came on, Robinson waited upon Mr. Quick, and communicated to him his hopes and pretensions. "Mr. Jones, the member for ——, you know Mr. Jones?" asked Robinson.

"O, yes!" replied Mr. Quick, "very intimately!"

"He promised to see you on the business—he has doubtless——"

"Not at all—never see him—never heard from him—very sorry, indeed," interrupted Mr. Quick.

"Good-morning, Sir — good-morning," cried Robinson, disgusted, sick at heart; and he hurried home to his miserable lodging, where he wrote a letter to the parliamentary member, upbraiding him, in scorching words, with his broken promise.

The next morning, Mr. Jones's footman brought back a missive from the senator, in which he "assured Mr. Robinson that he (Mr. J.) had not forgotten him; on the contrary, he (Mr. J.) had personally called at Mr. Quick's house; and not

finding him at home, had left his (Mr. J.'s) business with the little boy, which Mr. Jones considered to be 'going quite far enough!'"

A week afterwards, the election took place. Robinson, in utter hopelessness, addressed the board, soliciting the appointment. The day after the election, Mrs. Carey, with unusual smiles, informed her lodger that an old man from —— vestry had a letter for him.

"An old man?" asked Robinson, listlessly.

"From the workhouse: poor man! he's something of a scholar, and has seen better days."

"A scholar! the workhouse! and that will be my fate," muttered Robinson.

"Here he comes, Sir," said Mrs. Carey, as she heard the old man shambling up the stairs.

The man crawled into the garret. His back was bent as with a hundred years, and he spoke in hissing, whistling tones. "I've brought a letter—hem! hem!—a letter—from the vestry —hem! There's good luck in it, I know—you're elected schoolmaster."

The old man spoke truly. For once, a vestry had been won by literature—the intelligent style of Robinson had secured his election. Robinson was to appear before the board the next day to receive his appointment.

"I—I was a schoolmaster once myself," said the old man.

"You!" sighed Robinson, as he gazed upon the human wretchedness before him.

"Yes—I—I hope as I've brought you good news, you'll give me something to drink—*nunc est bibendum*—hem! hem! —I kept —— house at ——"

"Good God!" exclaimed Robinson, "you are"—he said no more, but, holding one hand before his eyes, he with the other motioned to Mrs. Carey to lead away the old man, who was no other than "Jones, Brown, and Robinson's" flogging schoolmaster. The original cause of his fall was never made

fully known, but it was whispered that the pedagogue had been convicted of embezzling the pocket-money of his scholars.

Robinson had compassed his wish. He could next day insure himself a decent competence. At the hour the vestry met to confer the appointment, their chosen schoolmaster lay day-dreaming in his garret-bed. His few remaining years were the years of a vagabond.

Such is the life of Brown who "could n't swim;" of Jones who could "swim a little;" and of the capable Robinson who could "swim anywhere."

He who was flogged for learning, lived and died a dunce; he who knew little, learned no more; and he who knew all things, had this precept scourged into his blood—to make use of none.

"THE 'BIRCH' IS FATHER TO THE MAN!"

RECOLLECTIONS OF GUY FAWKES.

When a man has once been very famous for jests and merry adventures, he is made to adopt all the jests that want a father, and many times such as are unworthy of him.—*Motteux's Life of Rabelais.*

At midnight on the fifth of November, in the year of grace one thousand six hundred and five, Guido Fawkes, "gentleman," was discovered, "booted and spurred," in the vicinity of St. Stephen's Chapel, having on his person "three matches, a tinderbox, and a dark lantern;" and purposing, by means of gunpowder, to blow up, says King James, "the whole nobility, the most part of the knights and gentry," besides "the whole judges of the land, with the *most of the lawyers*, and the whole clerks!" For this one indiscretion Guido Fawkes has forfeited his gentility, and become a proverb of wickedness. In boyhood, we looked upon Guido Fawkes, gentleman, as one a little lower than the devil: he had four horns and a dozen tails. "Years that bring the philosophic mind" have divested him of these excrescences and appendages, and Guido Fawkes now appears to matured charities merely a person of a singularly eccentric disposition.

Some five-and-twenty years ago, it was the patriotic custom of the authorities of an Isle of Sheppy dockyard to bestow upon their apprentices a few wagon loads of resinous timber, that a bonfire worthy of the cause it celebrated might be kindled from the public purse—that the effigy of the arch-fiend Guy might be consumed in a fire three times hotter than the fire of a furnace. Such fierce liberality was not lost upon the townspeople: their ardour in the burning business smouldered not: every man subscribed his plank or log; and,

from the Commissioner in his uniform, to Bobby in his pinafore, the fifth of November glowed, in the calendar of their minds, a pillar of fire. For a month before the day, the coming anniversary busied the thoughts of the boyish executioners, resolved to shew their patriotism in the appointments of their Guy—in the grotesque iniquity of his face—in the cumbrous state of his huge arm-chair. To beg clothes from door to door was then the business of every lover of church and state. To ask for a coat—a pair of breeches—a shirt (the frill could be made of paper)—hose and hat, was not mendicity, but the fulfilment of a high social duty.

Guy Fawkes would at length be dressed. A philosopher might have found good matter in his eleemosynary suit. In the coat of the blood-thirsty wretch, he might have recognised the habit of Scum, the slopseller, a quiet trader afloat of twenty thousand pounds—in the vest of the villanous ruffian, the discarded waistcoat of Smallgrog, the honest landlord of a little house for sailors—in the stockings of the atrocious miscreant, the hose of the equitable Weevil, biscuit-contractor to his Majesty's fleet—whilst, for the leather of the fiend-like effigy, Guy Fawkes was to be exhibited, and afterwards burned, in the broad-toed shoes of that best of men, Trap, the town-attorney!

The chair, too, in which Guy Fawkes sat, might it not have some day enshrined a justice of the peace—and the lantern fixed in the hand of the diabolical, linx-eyed monster—might it not have been the property of the most amiable and most somnolent of all the Blue Town watchmen? And then the mask fixed upon the effigy—or the lump of clay kneaded into human features, and horribly or delicately expressed, according to the benevolent art of the makers!—might not the same visor have been worn by a perfect gentleman, with considerable advantage, at a masquerade—might not the clay nose and mouth of the loathsome traitor have borne an accidental likeness to the very pink of patriots? Let philosophy ponder well on Guy Fawkes.

We will now attempt our childish recollections of the great Guy. We have waked at midnight, perhaps dreaming of the bonfire about to blaze, and thinking we heard the distant chorus sounding the advent of the Mighty Terror. No; it was the sea booming across the marsh—the wind rising and falling. There was nothing for it but to go to sleep and dream of unextinguishable squibs and crackers. At length, four o'clock arrives; the cocks crow—the boys can't be long now. There—hark!—how the chant comes up the street, like one voice—the voice of a solitary, droning witch! We lie breathless, and shape to ourselves Guy Fawkes in the dark! Our hearts beat quicker and quicker as the chant becomes louder; and we sit up in the bed, as the boys approach the door, and oh! how we wish to be with them! There—they are, in full chorus! Hark!—

"The fifth of November, as I can remember,
Is gunpowder treason and plot—
I know no reason, why gunpowder treason
Should ever be forgot.

We feel an unutterable pang, for loudest among the loud, we hear the shrill voice of Jack Tarleton. "Ha!" we sigh, "*his* mother lets *him* out." The bitterness passes away with the—

"Hallo, boys! hallo, boys! make a round ring—
Hallo, boys! hallo, boys! God save the King!"

And now the procession moves on, and the voices die in the distance, and we feel we are left alone; and, in a few minutes, we hear new revellers, rejoicing in the captivity of a suit of clothes stuffed with hay, and called Guy Fawkes! they pass on, and are followed by others, and our little brains are set at work, and seem seething in the song. Guy Fawkes! Guy Fawkes! Who—what *is* Guy Fawkes? We had been told that he had been caught with lantern, tinderbox, and matches, ready to blow up thousands of barrels of gunpowder, and so to destroy the king, bishops, and members of Parliament. It

must be shocking—very shocking: still we could not perfectly envisage the atrocity—we could not make out the full horror. We had an undefined sense of the greatness of a king, though we hardly dared to hope we should ever see one. We had a less remote notion of the nature of a bishop, having been helped somewhat in our speculations by the person of the curate at the garrison church. "Curates may come to be bishops, only bishops are very much greater; and curates have nothing upon their heads, whereas certain bishops might wear mitres." On learning this, we thought that bishops were merely full-grown curates; in the same way that we had seen Poland hens with their top-knots of feathers, only the spring before, bareheaded little chicks. It was thus, in the irreverence of childhood, we disposed of the whole bench of bishops. But now come we to the difficulty—what, what could be a member of Parliament? Was it a living thing? If so, had it a voice? Could it speak? Could it sit? Could it say yes and no? Could it walk? Could it turn? Or was it merely an image? Was it pulled by wires like sister Jenny's doll? We had been told that members of Parliament made laws. What *were* laws? Were they the lions and unicorns on the king's arms? Were they a better sort of cakes too dear for everybody to buy? Little boys ate parliament-cakes—were laws cakes for men? If so, were they gilt or plain?—with comfits or without?

It is no matter, we thought, being unable to satisfy ourselves: it is no matter. Guy Fawkes—that shadowy, terrible mystery—had once lived, and had tried to kill the king, the full-grown curates, and those undivined riddles—members of Parliament. We again went to our first question. Who *was* Guy Fawkes? Did he have a father and mother? Was Guy Fawkes ever a little boy, and did he fly a kite and play at marbles? If so, how could he have ever thought it worth his while to trouble himself with other matters? There was something terrifying in the idea of having played with Guy Fawkes. We fancied him at taw—we saw him *knuckle-down*. No, it

could not be; the imagination of the child could not dwell upon such an impossibility. Guy Fawkes a boy!—a baby! now shaking a rattle—now murmuring as he fed, his mother smiling down upon him! No, no—it was impossible; Guy Fawkes was never born—he was from the first a man—he never could have been a baby. He seemed to us a part of the things that had always been, and always would be—a piece of grim eternity; a principle of everlasting wickedness.

(Is it in childhood alone—is it only in the dim imaginings of infancy—in the wandering guesses of babyhood, that we manifest this ignorance? When the full-grown thief is hanged, do we not sometimes forget that he was the child of misery and vice—born for the gallows, nursed for the halter? Did we legislate a little more for the cradle, might we not be spared some pains for the hulks?)

And then we had been told Guy Fawkes came from Spain. Where was Spain? Was it a million miles away, and what distance was a million of miles? Were there little boys in Spain, or were they all like Guy Fawkes? How strange, and yet how delightful to us did it seem to feel that we were a part of the wonderful things about us! To be at all upon this world—to be one at the great *show* of men and women—to feel, that when we grew bigger we should know everything of kings, bishops, members of parliament, and Guy Fawkes! What a golden glory hung about the undiscovered!

And Guy Fawkes, we had heard, had his head cut off, and his body cut into quarters! Could this be true? Could men do to men what we had seen Fulk, the butcher, do to sheep? How much, we thought, had little boys to grow out of before they could agree to this! And then, when done, what was the good of it—what *could* be the good of it? Was Guy Fawkes eaten—if not, *why* cut him up?

Had Guy Fawkes a wife, and little boys and girls? Did he love his children, and buy them toys and apples—or, like Sawney Bean, devour them? Did Guy Fawkes say his prayers?

Had Guy Fawkes a friend? Did he ever laugh—did he ever tell a droll story? Did Guy Fawkes ever sing a song? Like Frampton, the Blue Town barber, did Guy Fawkes ever get drunk? At length we put to ourselves the question of questions:—

Was there ever such a man as Guy Fawkes? Did Guy Fawkes ever live?

This query annoyed us with the doubt that we had been tricked into a hate, a fear, a loathing, a wonder—and a mixture of these passions and emotions for a fib. We felt disappointed when we felt the reality of Guy Fawkes to be doubtful. We had heard of griffins and unicorns, of dragons that had eaten men like apples; and had then been told that there never had been any such thing. If we were not to believe in a dragon, why should we believe in Guy Fawkes? After all, was the whole story but make-game?

The child passively accepts a story of the future—he can bring his mind up to a thing promised, but wants faith in the past. The cause is obvious: he recollects few things gone, but is full of things to come. Hence, Guy Fawkes was with us the Ogre of a nursery: we could have readily believed, especially after the story of Beauty and the Beast, that he married Goody Two Shoes, and was the father of Little Red Riding Hood.

But Guy Fawkes grows with us from boyhood to youth. He gets flesh and blood with every November; he is no longer the stuffed plaything of a schoolboy or the grotesque excuse for begging vagabonds, but the veritable Guy Fawkes, "gentleman." We see him, "Thomas Percy's alleged man," at the door of the vault, "booted and spurred;"—we behold that "very tall and desperate fellow," lurking in the deep of night, with looks of deadly resolution, pounced upon by that vigilant gentleman of the privy-chamber, Sir Thomas Knevet! —We go with Guido, "the new Mutius Scævola born in England," before the council, where "he often smiles in

scornful manner, not only avowing the fact, but repenting only with the said Scævola, his failing in the execution thereof." We think of him "answering quickly to every man's objection, scoffing at any idle questions which were propounded to him, and jesting with such as he thought had no authority to examine him." And then we think of the thanksgiving of the great James, who gave praise that, had the intent of the wicked prevailed, he should not have "died ingloriously in an alehouse, a stew, or such vile place," but with the best and most honourable company."*

Guy Fawkes is, in our baby thoughts, a mysterious vision —one of the shadows of evil advancing on the path of childhood. We grow older, and the substances of evil come close upon us—we see their dark-lanterns and snuff the brimstone.

* See "His Majesty's Speech concerning the Gunpowder Plot," etc., in the Harleian Miscellany.

PERDITUS MUTTON;

WHO BOUGHT A "CAUL."

CHAPTER I.

Perditus Mutton sat in his solitary chamber, with serious eyes bent upon the "London Post"—the journal of the day; the day being the fifth of November, in the year of our regeneration, seventeen hundred and sixty.

"A Child's Caul.

"To be disposed of, a Child's Caul: price five guineas. Apply to Miriam Birdseye, Hog Lane, Shoreditch."

Such, reader, were the golden tidings suddenly beaming on the delighted orbs of Perditus Mutton. Now, be it known, that Perditus Mutton had long thought to become a voyager. He had read the marvels of Mandeville and Purchas—of Hakluyt and Coryate; and he had no wife to hold him in her white arms--no children to tug at his coat-skirts—no fireside gods to fix him at his hearth. He would therefore cross the perilous sea: he would, with his proper ears, listen to the singing of the mermaids; and, sauntering on Asiatic plains, with his own eyes behold the grazing unicorns. All here was dull, cold, faded—all there was luscious, genial, radiant. Perditus had brought an unsuspecting mind—a credulous heart—to the narrations of his darling travellers; they had been to him oracles of truth; their wonders dwelt in his brain, writ with an iron pen in rock. He had given himself a bondsman to those high-priests of fairyland, the old travellers; the grave tellers of unknown glories; the dreamers,

cum privilegio, of rosy dreams. Rare Marco Polo—glorious Mendez Pinto! authorised necromancers—lawful magicians—makers of innocent griffins—guileless dragons! Men, who have seen the phœnix waste in her odoriferous nest, and have watched the birth of the young pullet!

Yes, to Perditus Mutton, the old traveller was truth itself on a pilgrimage. Perditus had sworn fealty to the happy man who had heard the Syrens sing—who had beheld armies of pigmies mounted on cranes—who had known the ostrich to hatch her eggs by the heat of her eyes—who had seen a king stared to death by a basilisk—a porcupine transfix a roaring lion by a quill shot dexterously through and through its heart. He would have travelled round the globe to kiss the feet of the good Bishop Pontoppidan, the worthy ecclesiastic, who, musing on the coast of Norway, did behold a merman rise from the sea, who sang for two hours "and more." For a long time Perditus had determined upon setting forth a traveller. Yet, in his highest hopes, he would feel a pang that brought him to the earth again. England was, unhappily, an island; and qualms came upon his heart as he thought of the weltering main. At least three times a-year, for ten years past, had he dreamt of storm and shipwreck, and had awakened with the sea gurgling in his wind-pipe—singing in his ears. "A child's caul! five guineas!" He would straightway go to Hog Lane, Shoreditch, and so defy even destiny. That he had never before thought of that amulet against sinking, seemed to him more than an accident. It was evident that his evil genius—that morning happily off its guard—had all along left him insensible of the human virtues, the tried and approved qualities of a caul. He had, however, at length triumphed over the enemy, and he would lose no time in seeking the treasure.

Perditus rose and approached the window; the rain came in torrents from a brown-paper coloured sky, and although Perditus looked from the third story of the house of a painstaking barber in the Strand, he could see no coach. He turned

upon his heel, and one step brought him to the fireplace. He had resolved to defer his journey to Hog Lane until fairer weather, when looking up, his eye rested on, we fear, an apocryphal likeness of Prester John. As he gazed, Mutton thought he beheld the awful brows of the mysterious potentate knit in condemnation of delay:—there would, doubtless, be many bidders for the caul—he felt ashamed of his effeminacy —he took his hat—his old roquelaure—and descended into the deluge.

Now is, we think, the time to say a few words in description of our adventurous hero. He had not a relative in the world: he inherited eighty pounds a-year from an aunt who had brought him up almost from infancy; and, at the time of our story, he was a bachelor of two-and-thirty; though from a premature baldness, and certain natural scarlet streaks about his visage, a jury of matrons would, doubtless, have found him guilty of upwards of two score. His face was not expressive of the sterner passions; indeed, Perditus Mutton, once peering his hooked nose from out his narrow casement into the street below, had by an indecent passenger been likened to a huge turkey looking from a coop for his dinner.

For his moral man, it was distinguished by extreme credulity and more than even womanly gentleness. Frugal and sober, he was quoted as a proverb to the riotous and intemperate. Often have the neighbours exclaimed to Mrs. Beard, wife of Nathaniel Beard, the barber, that she "was blessed in such a lodger." The gossips gave Perditus no more than his due; mice might have been heard in the house, but not Mutton. And was this a man—we think we hear our readers exclaim —to travel? This a man to make his way among the Anthropophagi? But how often do we meet with such afflicting contradictions!

Perditus walked manfully on, and received it as a happy omen that he was scarcely wet to the skin when the rain ceased. There were now fifty coaches; but no, he would walk

himself dry: with this determination, he strode onward. The rain had discontinued; but it was November, and a good substantial fog, thick as a wool-pack, descended upon the city. Perditus felt his way through the mist, and though blinded and well nigh suffocated by the fetid vapours, the torches of the link-boys were to his imagination the fire-flies of Hindostan, and he snuffed the gales from the Moluccas. His heart was in the East as he struggled on towards Shoreditch.

Perditus, with all the unconquerable energy of an early traveller, had reached Cheapside. He had thought it impossible that the fog could increase; he had very ignorantly undervalued its capabilities. He stood still and gasped. "A link," cried a child in a piping voice—"a link, your honour?" and by the yellow flare of the link, Perditus saw two rolling black eyes, and the grinning mouth of a boy, who seemed like a little imp to revel in the mire, the stench, and darkness about him. "A link, your honour!" he crowed shrilly for the third time, and cut a caper in the air, and shook his torch, and whooped his delight. Perditus was confounded by the savage enjoyment of the little leaper.

"My dear," said Mutton—and he would have used the same words had he addressed a baboon—"my dear," he repeated in his voice of one note—"my dear," and he coughed until he was almost strangled by the fog.

"They call me Pups," said the boy, with a sneering impatience of Mutton's tenderness. "Pups!" and again he jumped and waved his torch.

"Do you know the way to Shoreditch, my dear?" asked Perditus.

"Go it backwards and sideways, which way you will," said the accommodating Pups.

"An extraordinary child," thought Mutton. "Go on, my dear;" and Mutton walked on, the boy rocking from side to side, and dancing short steps before him. "What's your father, my dear?" asked Perditus, after a little pause.

"Can't tell," said Pups; and he began to whistle like a canary.

"Can't tell! Why, what is his business?—what does he at present do, eh! my dear?" and Mutton spoke quite caressingly.

"Couldn't take it on myself to say," answered Pups.

"Why not, my child?"

"Father's dead," replied Pups; and again he burst into full whistle, and danced with new vivacity. A slight tremor shook the tender Perditus at the filial indifference of young Pups. "Poor little fellow! perhaps, like myself, he never knew the blessing of a father." Such was the charity of our hero. "And how do you get your bread?"

"Why, I pick it up in winter in the fogs: only there ar'n't such fogs now as there used to be; when my grandmother was a little one, there was a fog of three weeks; but some folks you know is born to luck. That was the time, she says: there warn't a gentleman who wouldn't been ashamed to own he hadn't lost a watch—it was *so* dark."

Mutton instinctively put his hand to his watch-chain, and then meekly observed, "Indeed!"

"But now, business isn't worth doing. The navy ruins us link-boys," said Pups despondingly.

"The navy, my boy! Why how?" inquired Mutton.

"So many ships—makes pitch so dear. And then hemp goes up every day," complained the urchin.

"Really; and do you know the reason of that, my love?"

"A friend of mine says 'cause the sessions get so heavy. If things go on in this manner, we must take to wax candles."

"Do you know Hog Lane, Shoreditch, my dear?" asked Mutton.

"'Specially at dinner-time," answered Pups; and again he danced as at the recollection of that happy hour.

"Why at dinner-time?" inquired Perditus. "You don't live there?"

"No—only take my meals: I live at the West-end. Do you want to go to Hog Lane?"

"That is my destination; I hope you know the right road?"

"If I was blind, I could tell it by the feel of the mud," said the unerring guide; and there was a pause of some minutes, Mutton musing on the desolate lot of little Pups, and little Pups casting backward glances at Mutton's watch-chain.

"Do you know a woman in Hog Lane called Birdseye?" asked Mutton.

"Many years," was the brief reply.

"Many years!—why, you haven't many, my dear?"

"Can't help that—but she's my grandmother."

"Your grandmother?"

"And here's her house," said young Pups, halting, with Perditus Mutton, before a hovel, the abode of Miriam Birdseye, possessor of the caul. Mutton was about to knock at the door, when Pups stood before it, and lowering his torch, that the light might fall with full effect upon his open palm, looked speakingly up in the face of Mutton. "We mayn't meet again, your honour," said Pups; whereupon Mutton, drawing sixpence from his pocket, with a pitying sigh for the forlorn state of the ragged, shoeless urchin, laid the coin in his hand, and was about to enhance the gift with wise and kind advice, when the sagacious young one bit the silver with his teeth, winked a knowing approval of its metallic flavour, and instantly vanished. Mutton looked around him; all was dark. He raised his knuckles to smite the door, but stood with lifted hand, made motionless by a cracked voice, half-chanting, half-preaching, within. He listened, but could distinguish no words; and then suddenly the sound ceased. Was he at the threshold of some wicked beldam—some squalid witch anointing for "the sabbath?" He heard footsteps: no, it was his own heart thumping in the darkness. He was for again plunging into the fog, when he was fixed to the threshold by

an inquiry from the cabin. "Who's there?" was asked, as Mutton thought, in hospitable tones, and ere he could reply, the door was opened.

CHAPTER II.

"Come in," said a little old woman. "As well as I can see, you look a gentleman; come in." Mutton, encouraged by the civility paid to his appearance, entered the wretched hovel. A fire burned redly on the hearth, and a rushlight flickered through the gloom. "Take a seat, Sir;" and the old woman handed to Perditus a bottomless chair. Mutton obediently seated himself within the frame, and put his hat upon the ground. As he sat, his face was quite on a level with the face of the old woman standing before him. Perditus never looked more rosy; his face, shone upon by the flame, glowed like the cheeks of a mandril: the countenance of the old woman was pale as meal; and there was a lustre in her full black eye, which made our hero wince as he met it. "She has seen better days," thought Perditus, as the old dame, like a dwarf queen, stood composedly before him. There was silence for a minute, each party scrutinizing the appearance of the other.

Mutton, shifting in his uneasy seat, said, at length, "I read the 'London Post.'"

The old woman, with a comprehensive gesture, but without a word, quitted Perditus, going behind a curtain that hung midway across the hovel. Our hero looked anxiously around. Had the old woman been chanting, talking to herself? There was not even a cat upon the hearth. The woman came from behind the curtain. She approached Perditus, and placing a small packet in his hand, said—"Five guineas."

"It can be warranted?" asked Mutton, as he unwrapt the treasure from its many coverings.

"It's very cheap," remarked the woman, disdaining to meet a doubt of its purity.

Mutton again wrapped up his prize, put it in his pocket, and took out his purse. "One—two—three—four—five," and Mutton counted the guineas into the lean hand of the old woman. As he gave the last guinea, there was a knocking at the door. In an instant, a tall, spare man, with grisly hair, and clay-coloured face, entered the hut.

"How is it to be?" asked the visitor of the old woman, taking no more notice of Mutton than of the bottomless chair he had just quitted. "How is it to be?" The old woman, raising her finger, glided behind the curtain, and was followed by the stranger. Perditus heard whispering, and then, as he thought, the tinkling of money. The woman and man again appeared. "Remember, everything the best," said the old woman; and the man, doggedly nodding assent, without a word, departed. The woman held the door open, and looked at Perditus Mutton: our hero took his hat, and with a new spirit, quitted the hut, carrying with him the purchased caul.

Now Mutton had been remarkable, among his other virtues, for the gravity of his walk. The statue of Don Guzman had not a more regular, a more majestic gait. How strange then did it appear even unto himself, that he should caper down Hog Lane with the unseemly agility of a morris-dancer! It appeared to him that he had lost the command of his members; for, spite of himself, he still went toe-and-heeling it down the lane, snapping his fingers, and, to his own astonishment, essaying fragments of song by no means naturalized in good society; it was very strange—extremely strange; and yet there was a fascination in the license not altogether unpleasing. At length, behold Mutton in Cheapside; and the fog that had somewhat cleared off, was again congregating its pestilent vapours. A man with a lighted torch approached our hero. "Do you want a link, your honour?"

"You be ——!" exclaimed Mutton, and, to his own surprise, dealt a half-playful blow upon the hat of the querist—a blow that sent the rim of his beaver down to his neck.

Having accomplished this, Mutton chuckled and capered, despite a latent sense of the impropriety of the feat. As Mutton entered St. Paul's Churchyard, he became unusually grave; with every step, a deeper sadness came upon him. Was he overcome by a contemplation of the works of man as triumphantly displayed in the cathedral? Did his spirit pay instinctive homage to the genius of Sir Christopher? We think not, for he could not withhold sundry furtive glances at the windows of a silversmith; and more than once, with a feeling akin to envy, lingered near a gentleman, imprudently handling his gold snuff-box in the fog. Now Mutton had always hated snuff; nay, he still hated it; but he knew not how it was—it almost seemed to him that he had taken a liking to the box. Mutton crept cautiously as a cat down Ludgate-hill, and every moment—perhaps it was the fog—he felt it more difficult to breathe. As he passed the Old Bailey, he thought he should absolutely be choked; he pressed onward into Fleet-street, and, to his astonishment, seemed to inhale new breath at every step, even though the fog became more dense as he proceeded. He had reached Temple Bar; and he had never felt better—never had such a flow of animal spirits, as the reader may believe from an incident that at that time and place occurred. A sweet little bud of a milliner—one of the thousand untended flowers, flung by fortune on the high-way—had just tripped into the city. An hour before, Mutton would have doffed his hat to the unprotected creature; paying deep reverence to her defencelessness—nay, we do believe, would have stripped even to a chairman who should but have looked with license on her. And now—but how shall we reconcile such opposites—how excuse, how account for, such sudden profligacy? The Roman has said that no man becomes a rogue in a minute: we care not to argue—our duty is at present only to chronicle; and sharing in the wonder, the astonishment, the indignation, and the disgust, that, we well know, will convulse the reader, when we narrate the atrocity

of Perditus,—it is still our painful duty to state, that he flung his arms about the little milliner, and, taking a dastardly advantage of the fog, vehemently kissed her. The poor little girl screamed, and walked on.

Criminal as he was, Mutton was not wholly lost to a sense of shame. He had no sooner committed the guilt, than he brought himself up at the Bar, struck with a feeling of remorse. "It was very wrong—very wrong," cried Perditus, putting his hand to his blushing cheek—"extremely wrong, but"—— and we mourn to say, the new-born libertine again rose within him, for a complacent smile broke upon his face; and hugging his cloak around him, he took a long step, which brought him into the city of Westminster, adding—"but very pleasant."

Mutton strided carelessly down the Strand. It was yet early. Go home? Pshaw! He had, he recollected, promised Mrs. Beard to be home to a dish of chocolate. Chocolate! It was odd; but, for the first time in his life, he thought chocolate a meagre, miserable liquid. What should he do? As Perditus Mutton stood thus undecided, a cry came along the Strand. That cry which, especially in a state of high civilization, strikes upon the finest chords of men's hearts, awakens their dormant sensibilities, employs their strongest energies; that cry, the intelligent reader will at once understand to be—"Stop thief!" At any time, Mutton would have paused at the shout—paused, and have felt the buttons of his pockets. On the present occasion, a host of new feelings rose in his bosom, as he heard the bellowing mob, and saw the lanterns of the venerable watchmen; men for whom he had always entertained the highest respect, but who, such a change had come upon him, he now considered in the unwise and uncharitable light of natural enemies. Mutton was not a man of blood; but he now felt that, under certain circumstances, he could comfortably kill a guardian of the peace. His less amiable impulses were fast developing themselves as the crowd came towards him. He stood at the mouth of an

alley—one of the mysterious veins that wind about the heart of mighty London—and saw the advancing mob. The individual mercilessly branded as a thief, came flying on; with the eyes of a lynx, he spied his vantage, and sprang like a greyhound by our hero up the court. The watchmen were following, when Mutton—a man who had himself served the office of constable—moved by some strange inspiration, flung aside his cloak, and knocked a watchman down; that ancient functionary fell upon his belly, and the second watchman, pressing on his fallen friend, fell over him. This accident was faithfully copied by two or three of the venerable officers, whilst, not altogether heedless of their confusion, the "thief," we must call him so, wound through the alley, closely followed by our hero. The watchmen, knowing the ramifications of the court to be very numerous, philosophically assured the party robbed, that "to go after him was of no use."

Mutton halted, as he thought, in safety; at the same time grasping the collar of the thief, who turned, and seeing who it was that held him, fell upon his knees. "There 's a good, kind gentleman, Sir!—Oh! your honour, Sir!—don't, Sir—I did n't take it, Sir."

"What, Pups, my dear!" cried Mutton, in a tone of affection, smiling blandly on the kneeling culprit.

"Don't take me to prison, Sir — don't, Sir!" cried the link-boy,—for it was, indeed, the juvenile torch-bearer of Hog Lane.

"Prison! not for the world, my jewel," exclaimed Mutton, and his heart seemed to open and yearn towards the tatterdemalion, pale and shivering at his feet.

"Upon your soul, you won't, Sir?" asked the boy, half-persuaded by the earnest tones and fond looks of Perditus; "you won't hurt me?"

"As soon hurt my own flesh and blood," said Mutton, with affecting emphasis; "but come home—come to my house;" and Perditus, his cloak wrapped about the shoeless Pups,

threaded various narrow ways, and at length knocked hastily at the door of his lodgings.

"Dear me—la! What, is it you? such a knock!" cried Mrs. Beard; "is it you, Mr. Mutton?"

"Who should it be?" asked Perditus, and Mrs. Beard opened eyes and mouth at such unusual want of courtesy on the part of her mild lodger.

"Your chocolate and dry toast is ready," said Mrs. Beard.

"Curse chocolate!" exclaimed Perditus, and Mrs. Beard flung up her arms. "Get some brandy," said our hero.

"Rum for me," piped the shrill voice of Pups from under the cloak of his protector; and Mrs. Beard started, as if in Perditus Mutton spoke some demon.

"And, Mrs. Beard, get me a rump-steak," said Mutton.

"And *inions*," cried the epicurean link-boy, discovering himself.

"O! and I 'll have a mug of flip by way of a night-cap, Mrs. Beard," said Mutton.

"And, Mother Beard," screamed Pups from the top of the staircase, "don't forget some 'bacco."

Mutton entered his room, and was nimbly followed by little Pups, Mrs. Beard remaining below, a very statue of astonishment. However, she was at length compelled, by the boisterousness of Mutton—of the lodger she was "blessed in"—to fulfil his orders, and also the supplementary commands of his young friend. Perditus, the meek, sensitive, temperate Perditus, ate his supper—and how such an appetite came upon him, he paused not to inquire—and drank spirits—his former abomination, in the admired society of a baby-vagabond, on whom he continued to lavish the kindest words and tenderest looks, his caresses being received by their object with a sneering incredulity. Mutton was deep in the flip, when, with one hand upon the mug, in the other hand a pipe—until that night untasted luxuries—he sat, with melting eyes gazing on the yellow, dirt-smeared face of Pups, who, lifted on a chair, puffing

tobacco smoke from a long pipe, and swinging his crossed legs, piebald with mud at least a foot from the ground, replied to the affectionate glances of his sudden friend. Pups spoke and looked the cunning, thievish, ragged Asmodeus of a London alley. He half-closed one of his restless, wandering eyes, and having inhaled a volume of smoke, he puffed it from his hole of a mouth, in a small, continuous stream, looking searchingly at Perditus. The operation done, he thus, in a wheedling, distrustful tone, interrogated Mutton,—

"I say, old fellow, what is it makes you so fond of me?" And Pups replaced the pipe between his lips, and awaited an answer.

The question evidently embarrassed Mutton; for he shook his head and replied,—

"My pretty dear, I don't know;" and again he gazed with paternal fondness on the swindling, sinister Pups—that devil's errand-boy.

"Well, I was in luck to fall in with you; else, by this time," said the little reprobate, "I might have been all fair for the stone-jug."

"Take some flip, my love," said Mutton, affected by the thought; and somehow suddenly divining that Pups, in the language of his tribe, discoursed of Newgate. "Take some flip, and—zounds! your 'bacco's out"—saying which, Mutton, affectionately watching his drinking guest, filled for him his empty pipe.

"In the stone-jug," continued the imp; "and only for a bit of shagreen;" saying which Pups, with an upraised lip and a contemptuous motion of the hand, shoved the watch—the worthless shagreen prize—along the table towards his patron.

Mutton looked at the watch with an eye of disgust, that in an instant beamed with sympathy on Pups. That such a cherub should have been sacrificed for a bit of shagreen!

"Shocking to think of," said Mutton, turning over the stolen property. "How lucky that I stood at the court!"

"But when you had your fist at my collar, I thought it was all over with me. I thought you'd give me up. I thought you a gentleman," said Pups.

"You don't know me, my dear," said Mutton, desirous of suppressing any rising fears on the part of his guest, and at the same time putting the stolen goods in his pocket. "You don't know me."

There was a knock at the door, and Pups, laying his pipe down, looked warily about him. Was it an officer? Another knock, and Mrs. Beard entered the room. She had a great respect for her old, her late exemplary lodger; but she looked ireful as a Philippine witch at little Pups, who, seeing it was only "Mother Beard," had resumed his pipe, and, serenely smoking, stared at the landlady.

"It's just eleven, Mr. Mutton," said Mrs. Beard.

"You're as good as a clock," said the complimentary Pups; and he winked at that respectable woman.

"Past eleven, and we want to lock up. When does the—the young gentleman go?" asked Mrs. Beard, trembling with passion, as she glanced at the still winking vagabond.

"Not at all; go!" cried Mutton. "The unprotected creature stays with me—he sleeps here."

"What! in my bed—and with those legs?" exclaimed Mrs. Beard, casting flaming glances at the feet of Pups, shod with mud, and baked by the hospitable fire of his protector. "A bit of dirt like that!"

"I'm ashamed o' you, Mrs. Beard," said the irritating Pups, taking the air of a lecturer—"talk o' dirt in that way! remember your beginning."

Mrs. Beard was about to make a most voluble reply, when Mutton swaggered from the table, laid his hands upon the shoulders of his landlady, turned her, as upon a pivot, round, and, pushing her into the passage, shut and then bolted the door. Mrs. Beard was breathless—but it was with astonishment. That Mr. Perditus Mutton—he who would not have

brushed the wing of a butterfly—that he, the mild, polite Mutton should have laid ruffian hands upon a woman—and that woman his landlady!

"Depend upon it, he's drunk," said Beard to his wife, when she gaspingly related the atrocity to her charitable husband. "He's drunk!"

"O Nicholas! I wish to my heart he was; then, then indeed, there would be hope! But he's mad, Nick—depend upon it, Mr. Mutton's mad!"

Such was, on due consideration, the belief of Mutton's landlady; and such may possibly be the opinion of the reader, if he have not forgotten the character which we gave our hero—a character in no accordance with his late exploits.

Midnight came; and after a song from Mutton, and a strange ditty—certainly not a Christmas carol—from the musical Pups, both host and visitor retired to bed.

CHAPTER III.

It was twelve o'clock on the following day, and Mutton and his cherished young friend were still at breakfast. Perditus watched the eating and drinking of the yet unclean Pups, with the like care and tenderness that a girl bestows on a pet canary. It seemed to Mutton that the boy would never have sufficient. "Mad, certainly mad!" cried Mrs. Beard, despairingly, as she continued to bring up new supplies of eggs, loaves, and butter. "Do, my dear, eat some more; la! you'll be starved—pray, eat some more:" and Perditus still pressed food upon his delicate companion.

"Couldn't do it, old fellow—tell you, couldn't do it," said the replete Pups, stretching himself luxuriously in the easy chair of Mutton.

"Make quick work here, then!" cried Mutton to his landlady, who cleared the table, feeling more and more afflicted at

the malady of her lodger. She had quitted the apartment but a few minutes, when she returned. "Mr. Tadmor of 'The Drakes,' was below."

"Hand him up," said Perditus; "up with old Drybones," said Mutton; thus profanely designating the learned and respected secretary of 'The Drakes,' of which erudite society it may be necessary to say a few words in description.

"The Drakes," then, took their name from the great circumnavigator, Sir Francis Drake; and were composed of adventurous spirits who, condemned, by various cogent reasons, to remain at home, had possibly, on that account, a more intense admiration of travelled enterprise. Much had been expected from the long and frequent sittings of "The Drakes," —much from their weekly disquisitions, when readings, illustrative of the one object of the society, might be listened to, at least by the sleepless. It was only at the last meeting that Mr. Tadmor himself had begun Raleigh's "History of the World," which he trusted to read to his brethren in little more than a twelvemonth; when, such was the ardour manifested by other members, that it was almost a certainty that a complete reading of not only "Robinson Crusoe," but of "Gulliver," would follow. Dark and curious points had been satisfactorily explained by the intelligence and industry of "The Drakes." They had convinced the hitherto most sceptical that Columbus had touched at Cuba, and that Pizarro did not pass all his life in Spain. Our hero, Perditus Mutton, was not only a member of "The Drakes," but filled the arduous and delicate post of treasurer. In his hands were lodged the funds—funds that had for seven years accumulated, and, at the time we write, amounted to little less than four pounds. His proverbial rectitude—his punctuality—his wise frugality, had recommended him to his brother "Drakes" as the man of men for treasurer. At the last meeting, however, the society had voted the expenditure of fifty shillings from the funds to purchase the tobacco-stopper of Sir Walter

Raleigh, that relic having been happily discovered at the shop of a dealer in marine stores, Tower Hill. Cyrus Tadmor now presented himself, prepared to give a receipt for the money; he being authorised to treat with the tradesman for a transfer of the interesting property. Tadmor was a tall, elderly man, of few words, uttered in a dry voice.

"Good-morning, Mutton." Our hero, throwing his right leg over the arm of his chair, and staring at his brother "Drake," nodded and whistled. Tadmor started a little back, but, recovering himself, observed, "Very cold weather."

"D—d cold!" cried Mutton. "Have some brandy?" Had he uttered high-treason,—offered deadly poison to Tadmor,—that excellent "Drake" had not been more astonished at the words and actions of his fellow-member.

"You know what I come for, Mr. Mutton?" said Tadmor. Mutton shook his head. "Yes; you must remember: the vote,—the tobacco-stopper?"

"O!" exclaimed Perditus. "Go on, old Tad."

"Old Tad! But——" Tadmor faltered, and again stared at Perditus, to be certain that he looked upon a "Drake;"—satisfied of the melancholy fact, he proceeded—"Well, then, Mr. Mutton, I come for the money."

"What money?" cried Mutton.

"What money! Mr. Mutton?—I—this is no time for banter; the subject, at least, I, as a 'Drake,' think so, does not admit of a jest. I attend upon you, armed with the authority of the society, for fifty shillings."

"Fifty shillings! Well?" said Mutton.

"Which you, as treasurer, will, of course, hand over to me. Here is the receipt," said Tadmor. "Of course, you have the money?"

"O, yes! To be sure," said Mutton.

"And you will give it me?" said Tadmor, drawing close to the treasurer.

We defy our reader to guess the reply of Perditus Mutton.

Can it be believed,—can it be accounted for upon any known and natural principle, that when the Secretary of the "Drakes" asked for fifty shillings—their money—of their valued treasurer—can it be believed, that that soul of honour, that spirit of meek rectitude, met the demand by placing his forefinger perpendicularly at the right side of his nose, looking with laughing defiance in the face of the officer of the society, and exclaiming with peculiar force, one word,—and that word—"*Gammon!*"

Tadmor jumped to his feet, and, if looks betray anything, evidently expected the floor to open. Mutton sat, with a face of brass, coolly enjoying the astonishment of his visitor. "Can it be possible?" at length exclaimed Tadmor; "can there be such perfidy in the world? Such hypocrisy! Well! after this, who is to be trusted?"

"Nobody," said Mutton, with perfect assurance. "As for the money of the club, I can't give it up; I don't know how it is, Tad, but I can't do it."

"But there is the law, Mr. Mutton,—and the law can punish."

"It's only a simple debt, I think; only a debt:" and Tadmor felt, if possible, a greater shock at the calculating depravity of the culprit. He was about to attempt an expression of his feelings, when Mutton, with much significance, bade him "Good-day! I wish you a very good-day, Mr. Tadmor: I tell you, I would give you the money if I could, but there's a something here," and Mutton, affectingly, put his hand to his heart, "there's a something here won't let me." Saying which, Mutton vigorously bowed his brother "Drake" to the door. Tadmor, almost weeping at the iniquity of man, ran down stairs, determined to call the "Drakes" to council.

"Is he gone?" asked little Pups, looking from behind the large easy chair of Mutton, where, on the entrance of Tadmor, he had hidden himself.

"Why did you creep there, my love?" said Mutton. "Why did you hide?"

"What! didn't you know him? I thought he'd come for me," said Pups, with a grave shake of the head.

"Come for you, my dear! What for?"

"What for?" exclaimed Pups; "bless your innocent eyes, Mr. Mutton! but may there never be another fog, if that warn't the shagreen."

It was too true: Mr. Cyrus Tadmor, secretary to the "Drakes," and hitherto intimate friend of their upright and punctilious treasurer, was the unfortunate gentleman despoiled on the previous evening of his shagreen family watch. "I say, if he has seen it!" remarked Pups, with an ominous look, pointing to the stolen property, hung by Mutton over the mantelpiece. "Mr. Mutton," continued Pups, with the gravity of a cabinet councillor, "you are older than I am, and it isn't for me to advise, but don't you think we'd better leave these lodgings? We *may* find 'em very unhealthy."

A sense of impropriety, a latent emotion of his former nature, made Mutton thoughtful. How extraordinary seemed to him the changes of the past few hours! Was he, could he be, the same Perditus of yesterday? He had a vague recollection of another state of being—of a Mutton very different to that Mutton the protector and the accomplice of a pigmy pickpocket! He who had held the slightest departure from truth and honesty as inevitably fatal to the dignity of human nature, had now the kindliest yearnings towards his fallen species—nay, felt a mysterious respect for courageous roguery. He who would have denounced a highwayman, could now take off his hat to him! That he, Perditus Mutton, should be the unlawful possessor of his friend Tadmor's watch! More, that he should feel resolved, at all hazards, to retain it. And then his affection for little Pups! Mutton had never been a father; but sure he was he could not have felt a more paternal love towards his own flesh than towards the ragged, wary urchin, staring, winking before him. With such sensations, the appearance of his adopted child smote the sensibilities of his

adoptive sire. Sweet innocent! it had neither hose nor shoes, and its jerkin and doublet hung in fringe and lappets. Mutton, almost with tears in his eyes, ordered Mrs. Beard to send for Piece, the tailor. "Yes, my pretty one," said Mutton, smiling down upon the leering Pups, "yes, you *shall* be a gentleman." Piece lived but a few doors away; came instantly on the summons of his customer, and, by great luck, having a suit just completed for the son of the churchwarden, a boy of the same inches as Pups, was prevailed upon to devote the clothes to the service of Mr. Mutton's young friend. Hat, shoes, and linen were obtained with all the celerity of which ready money is capable, Perditus assisting at the toilet of the boy, and Mrs. Beard from time to time declaring that her amiable lodger was mad.

"Fit him like his skin, Mr. Mutton: three guineas if you please," said Piece, Mr. Mutton always paying ready money. Piece received the guineas, and, having given a last attention to the bright green coat of Master Pups, walked gratefully down stairs.

"It's all right," said Pups to his patron, as he heard the street-door close.

"What is right? the clothes my dear?" asked Mutton.

"No; the guineas—here they are: while he was buttoning me up, I——" and the adroit operator displayed the three guineas silently extracted from the pocket of the tailor. What could have changed the nature of Mutton—what could possess him to make him smile benevolently on the unhappy child, and, patting his head, to say, "Dear little rogue?"

Perditus and the boy sallied into the street. Who, that saw Pups trip along the Strand, could have believed him to be the self-same urchin that last night flew, winged with terror, from the pursuing crowd? The dirty, ragged, thievish magpie was become a paroquet.

"How d'ye do? I wanted to see you: I shall be alone,—come to-day and dine with me. Mind, at three exactly." Such

was the greeting, such the invitation of Mr. Rota, a county magistrate, and an old acquaintance of Mutton's. "Why, what's the matter?" said Rota, pulling up his horse, and holding forth his hand to Perditus.

"Nothing,—nothing;—it's very cold," said Mutton, feeling on the sudden an extraordinary disgust of his friend the magistrate.

"Bless me! whose boy is that?" said Rota, staring hard at little Pups, who seemed to blench somewhat under the inspection.

"He's a—a young friend of mine," replied Mutton; "a—a pretty lad."

"I certainly have seen him before," said the magistrate; "where could it have been?"

"No, no: a young friend of mine, not long from the country," asserted Perditus; and he hurried away, to the astonishment of Rota, the boy shewing no inclination to remain behind. "Glad we've got from the *beak*," said Pups, who, we have no doubt, recognised in Rota a former acquaintance.

Mutton and his precious charge walked on; Mutton, as on his return home the previous evening, feeling an unusual interest in the property supposed to be upon the person of every passenger. He could not tell what on the sudden had made him take so lively an interest in the effects of his fellow-citizens. His thoughts were thus busied in the affairs of his neighbours, when he grasped the shoulder of Pups, endeavouring to steady himself; without such feeble support, Mutton had suddenly fallen.

"Hold up, Sir!—what's the matter?" cried Pups, in a breath.

Great was the change in the face of Perditus. He staggered to a post, and, leaning thereon, gazed intently at a female. We are aware that in this there is little extraordinary—the like has happened many times to many men and many women;—but surely, surely, Cupid—for it was he at that hour at

work — had never, since his wings were fledged, played such a prank. Perditus Mutton had fallen, as into a fit, over head and heels in love; and now he stood, and, panting, gazed on his destroyer. And who was she, and what was the fair creature doing? she was doubtless a Naiad of the stream; but being on earth, sold fish. At the moment Mutton first beheld her she was in the attitude of justice, holding scales; and in those scales were silver eels! Never before had Mutton felt even a tickling of the passion; but now was he a bondman to the archer. "A groat a-pound," said the naiad, and her voice entered the heart of Mutton: he stood rapt as in a dream; and who shall tell the tumult of his soul when he beheld his sweet destroyer seize each writhing captive, and strip it of its slippery coat? Like a true lover, Mutton wished himself an eel.

The maiden, the bargain being concluded, moved onward; Mutton, like a chained captive, following the steps of the conqueror. What was it that had enslaved him? Could it be beauty? Was he enthralled by lank, unkemped locks, an eye with a furtive expression, the smallest nose, and the largest mouth? Had he fallen a victim to these blandishments, or was there a magic in the tones that pulled him onward, as with a silver cord? We know not; but certain it is, his heart continued to glow and dilate, and every nerve in his frame responded musically to the music of "live eels."

Behold Mutton, deaf to the remonstrance of little Pups, now stalking on, now lingering about doors, obedient to the will of his destroyer. The rain came down, but the flame of Mutton burned with undimmed brightness. Still he followed the enslaving vendor of "live eels."

"Well, Betsy, where are you going?" Such was the question put by a sister naiad to the lady-love of Mutton.

"Going! where should I be going if not to Hog Lane? I suppose, Sarah, you know what's done to-day?" and she lifted her apron to her eye.

"Poor dear fellow!" said Sarah. "Well, Betsy, may you

get as good a one! for, bating he was a little wild, he was as kind a fellow as ever broke a tester:" and with this brief eulogy of one, doubtless departed, the speaker passed Mutton, and Mutton followed Betsy.

Perditus Mutton! the correct, refined, gentlemanly Perditus, following a woman who spoke but two words, and those words "live eels!"

It was four o'clock when Mutton arrived in the neighbourhood of Hog Lane. The rain had continued to fall, and our hero, hot with love, was drenched with water. Young Pups, with doubtless a respect for the rich wardrobe he had so miraculously obtained, had long since sought shelter, leaving his patron free to walk alone. Mutton reclined in a sweet and bitter melancholy against the corner of a shed, watching the opposite door of a mansion of an equally unpretending style of architecture. Still the rain came down; but Mutton seemed to heed not the cataract. In a short time a female issued from the opposite house,—a female clothed in rusty black. It was the self-same Betsy who had, a quarter of an hour before, entered there to don the melancholy robe, and to leave therein the unsold portion of her silvery ware. Mutton followed her sorrowful steps. What, then, was his astonishment to behold her enter the very hovel where, on the previous night, he had purchased the inestimable treasure,—a treasure he had then about him,—a treasure he would never for an instant part with,—the CAUL, price five guineas! Mutton paused and watched. In a short time he saw the man, the same man, with the clay-coloured face he had seen the night before, come from the house, and in a garb that left no doubt of his dread business—he was an undertaker. A sad procession, composed of at least a dozen persons, and among whom Perditus instantly recognised the little, pale, old woman, came forth following the dead. Mutton found himself dragged along; it was in vain to struggle with the power that pulled him. He must follow the corse! He walked at a short distance from the

crowd, which continued to increase. "Poor fellow!" exclaimed twenty people; "Such a generous soul!" said another score; and everybody who spoke of the deceased spoke in his praise, and expressed hopes for his happiness. "He must have been a very excellent person," thought Mutton, as he walked on with the throng. "No doubt, a person fulfilling all the difficult duties of his perilous life with exemplary goodness." Such were the thoughts of Perditus, for the moment brought suddenly back to his former principles, which then as suddenly would quit him, and he would again pay homage to the new spirit that had last night fallen upon him.

CHAPTER IV.

The burial over, the mourners returned to the late dwelling of the deceased. The spell-bound Mutton followed the footsteps of the female in black, but was compelled to halt at the door of the hovel, where, for two hours at least, he lingered, listening to detect, if possible, the notes of her delicious voice from the hubbub within. There was loud laughing, stamping, knocking—sounds of merriment that, at any other time, would have stricken Mutton with horror; but he had lost his better nature—he was a changed man. He stood, his only thought to catch the witching accents of the charmer. As he paused with quickened ears at the door, he heard one of the company call for a song—a call repeated by at least a dozen voices. There was a silence, and then a buzz of remonstrance or dissent; and then Mutton heard one of the party familiarly urge the hesitating vocalist:

"Come, Bunkum, give us that chaunt poor Tom used to like."

"Don't—I can't bear it," exclaimed a feminine voice, sobbingly; and Perditus almost leaped as he heard the tones of his mistress.

"Pour it out, Bunkum," cried the first speaker, unmindful of the sensibilities of Betsy; "go on: why you make as much ceremony as a foreigner. If you'd come from the Opera outright you couldn't be more nice, I *do* think."

"Got a cold at Hounslow last week," said Bunkum; and assuredly he gave evidence of the calamity.

"Go on—we'll take the song in the rough then," said Bunkum's companion; and after due preparation, Tom's favourite song was sung, the whole of the company joining in loudest chorus.

Mutton was wholly absorbed by the pathos of the ditty, which certainly proved Tom to have been of a pensive cast of mind, as the following verse—the only one for which we have space—will testify. Among other complaints the sufferer sang—

> "How hard is the chains of confinement
> That keeps me from my love's delight!
> Cold chains and cold fetters surround me,
> And a plank is my pillow at night!"

Mutton, with gushing eyes and melted soul, listened to the ballad—the especial favourite of the deceased Tom. Never before, had music so played upon the strings of his heart, albeit he had heard the warblings of the great Tenducci. Mutton was startled from the delicious reverie into which true harmony will surprise sensitive minds, by a voice abruptly calling upon Betsy.

"Now, Betsy—now, old woman"—a spark of indignation fired the heart of Mutton—"now, my lass, give us a song!"

"Me, sing!—me! How could you think it?" said a female voice, tremulous, as Mutton thought, with grief.

"Well, he was a good cretur, Betsy; but it's wicked to grieve—so give us a song," cried a feminine friend.

With a deep sigh and a look of resignation—a look of which Mutton was, unhappily, deprived—the mourner began:—

" 'Twas down in Cupid's garden,
For pleasure I did go,
And all for to see the flowers
Which in that garden grow,
Which in that garden grow!"
" I had n't been—I had n't——"

" I can't do it," cried the singer, hysterically; " it seems for all the world as if dear Tom was looking at me." There was a murmur of sympathy, and a third party was called upon to subscribe to the harmony of the evening, when Mutton felt a hand pulling at his cloak.

" Why, if it is n't you!" said Pups. " Poor father! I did n't know it was to be so soon, for I had n't been home these three days."

" And was it your father, my pretty dear?" asked Mutton.

" Yes; they said he was very fond of me; I dare say he was too, only he never had any time to shew it," said the boy, and tears stood in his eyes.

" And your mother—where is she?" inquired Mutton.

" I can 't tell—never saw her—only grandmother. Father, they do say, courted Betsy Basket—she that you would follow to-day—poor father!"

" And did n't you love him?" asked Perditus.

" I do n't know—dare say I did; only, you see, people as live in the streets, in wet and cold, and sleep on steps, hav'n't time to love one another like folks in warm houses."

" And what did your father die of?" questioned Perditus.

" He warn't drowned; no, he was born safe against that," replied Pups, who hastily continued—" but won't you come in? Stop a little, though—I'll just see grandmother—wait here;" and the boy entered the hovel, and was received with a shout of surprise, justified by his improved appearance. Pups quickly explained that he had met with " such a prime gentleman!"—he was outside—might he come in? The unanimous consent of the company was immediately given, and Perditus Mutton for the second time stood beneath the

roof of Miriam Birdseye: the old woman looked at Mutton a significant acknowledgment of their acquaintance, and then turned and whispered to her next neighbour, pointing out our hero as "the gentleman who had last night purchased her dear Tom's caul!—Dear, sweet, unfortunate boy."

Poor old Miriam was the mother of Tom; and, though the world had judged and punished him as an incorrigible scapegrace—a ruthless libertine—a hardened reprobate—he was nevertheless unto her a "dear, sweet, unfortunate boy."

At any other time Perditus would have shuddered at the faces he saw around him—faces marked with the recklessness and the despair of crime—with brutish ignorance, the teeming parent of vice—with the haggardness of want—the cunning of imposture. And there, too, was the child—a poor creature, suffered to grow up like a young wolf, to be afterwards hunted to the death, because it was nothing better! Perditus, however, was proof to these impressions. He looked around him, and felt a terrible sympathy with his new companions. He approached the woman—the betrothed of the late Thomas—and, sitting beside her, took her hand with all the reverence of profound love.

"La, Sir!" said the girl, simpering.

> "And she look'd with such a look, and she spoke with such a tone,
> That he almost received her heart into his own."

What devilish necromancy had enslaved him? What art, what magic, could have changed Perditus Mutton—the sensitive, reserved, delicate Perditus—into the worshipper of a coarse wench—a very drab? The company exchanged looks that plainly enough declared their astonishment.

"It's all right," said Bunkum; "the gentleman is very drunk!"

A jest was let fall by one of the wags, and a loud shout followed. In the midst of the clamour, Perditus, who had been protesting eternal affection to Betsy, suddenly leapt from his seat. He stared about him as if awakened from a hideous dream.

"What 's the matter, Sir?" asked Betsy, approaching him.

Perditus receded from her with an expression of intolerable disgust; rushed to the door, and made his way up the lane.

"It 's all right!" said Bunkum; "I 've picked his pocket;" and the robber triumphantly exhibited a packet. It was opened; but, to the disappointment of the party, it proved to be nothing but—"Dear Tom's caul!"

Since the birth of Mercury there had never been so benevolent a theft. Perditus had been relieved of an imp that threatened to destroy him; of a fiend that had subtly endowed him with the ungracious dispositions of the first owner of the caul; a type of superstition, of which when the best and wisest of us are enamoured, though before the meekest and most innocent of lambs, we are prone to become little better than "lost muttons!"

Need we add that the "Drakes" were presented with the tobacco-stopper of Sir Walter, at the cost of their awakened treasurer—that Mr. Tadmor again possessed his shagreen watch?

CHAPTER V.

Perditus lived until sixty. He was attended to the grave by his few surviving brother "Drakes," all of whom mourned the loss of a kind, gentle, genial man. A woman and three little girls—god-daughters of the deceased—stood at the grave: their father, the parish clerk—a man honoured for the virtuous fulfilment of the social duties—sobbed bitterly as the earth rose above Perditus. That clerk was the poor, outcast, vagabond link-boy—the cunning, thievish, little Pups. He had been snatched from ignorance and guilt by the compassion of our hero; and the happy, honest man wept tears of gratitude in the grave of his preserver.

Requiescat in pace!

SHAKSPEARE IN CHINA.

I cannot tell that the wisest Mandarin now living in China is not indebted for part of his energy and sagacity to Shakspeare and Milton, even though it should happen that he never heard of their names.—*Godwin's Essay on Sepulchres.*

We do great injustice to the College of Mandarins, if we think that body at the present time ignorant of the marvels of Shakspeare. No: Canton has produced its commentator, and by the means of his explanatory genius it is hoped that in a few years the whole Celestial Empire will, in the fulness of its knowledge, bow to the majesty of the poet. At this moment we have before us a radiant evidence of the admission of the Great Teacher into the Sacred City: believe it, astounded reader, Shakspeare has gone farther than Nieuhoff. England, however—that England, who has shewn herself such an idolatress of her darling son—who has encircled the house in which he first drew breath with a golden rail—who has secured it from possible destruction at the hands of the bigot, by making it the property of the state*—that England, who, when the tree planted by the bard was felled by the axe, wept as she turned the timber into 'bacco-stoppers—that England, who, even at the present time, only a little more than two centuries after his death, has already begun to think of the propriety of erecting, at some future day, a national monument to her poet—that England cannot, after the many and affecting instances of her deep maternal love toward her most illustrious child, refuse to aid in the dissemination of Shakspearanity in any corner of the world, but at the present interesting crisis, more particularly in the empire of China.

* The Mulberry-tree was cut down; and the race of Gastrels is not extinct.

The cry that the Chinese are not yet fit for Shakspeare—a cry raised in the same acute spirit in which people in chains have been said not to be fit for freedom—can, we think, have no bad effect on even moderately liberal men, after the production of papers now beneath our hands. All we ask of the foreign minister is a company, to act either on board Chinese junks or on shore, as the intellectual wants of his Majesty may require; nay, if under the direction of their own stage-manager, to exhibit themselves at any distance in the interior. The company to be paid and clothed by the government for whose benefit they act, with this condition, that they be subject to the laws and customs of the Chinese, obediently shaving their eyebrows and letting their tails grow. For the passing difficulty of the language, that we have no doubt will soon be overcome; many of the actors, we religiously believe it, speaking and playing equally well in English or in Chinese. We now come to the proofs of the fit condition of the people for Shakspeare—for that which they will "hail as a boon," and which we shall part with as a drug.

Some months since, it was our fortune to be present at an auction of curiosities from the East—shells, parrots, rice-paper, chopsticks, japanned cabinets, and cut-throat sparrows. Our friend Peregrine—he had just arrived from the Great Pyramid, from the top of which, and by means of a most excellent glass, he had discovered, and after made captive, three giraffes—bade money for a picture: as it was a scene from Shakspeare there were of course no opposing bidders, and he became the owner of what proved to be an exquisite evidence of Chinese art and imitation; in brief, no other than a copy, faithfully drawn, and most brilliantly coloured, by an artist at Canton, of the Boydell picture of Falstaff in the Buck-basket, and the Merry Wives. The picture, however, proved in itself to be of little value compared to the essay found to be inserted at the back between the picture and the frame; being written on paper, half a quire of which would not exceed the

thickness of a butterfly's wing, it is no wonder that the treasure escaped even the meritorious vigilance of an auctioneer. It is this essay that we now propose to submit to the reader, in evidence of the condition of China for an instant export of a company of fine Shakspearian actors. When we state that the essay has been printed by its author in at least one of the Canton journals, the dissemination and adoption of the principles comprised in it, over the whole of China, cannot for half a moment be a matter of doubt.

We regret that we cannot wholly acquit our intelligent Mandarin of the taint of ingratitude. It is evident that his views of English history—at least of that portion in which Falstaff conspicuously appears, for the writer suffers no subject to escape in any way involved in the character of the immortal knight—have been gathered from one of our fellow-countrymen; he has, if we may be allowed to say it, sucked the brain as a "weasel sucks eggs," of some enlightened but obscure supercargo, whom he has left unhonoured and unthanked. How different, in a similar case, was the conduct of an Englishman: our deep veneration of the national character will not, at this happy moment, suffer us to be silent on the grateful magnanimity of Mr. Nahum Tate, who, in his preface to his improved version of "King Lear," returns his "thanks to an *ingenious friend* who first pointed out the tragedy" to his condescending notice! The silence of the Mandarin towards his instructor is the more strange, as ingratitude is not the vice of the barbarian. An ingenious friend points out a skulking, unarmed straggler to a Cossack; the soldier makes him prisoner, cuts off his ears, slits his nose, bores his tongue, and, having mounted the captive behind him, in the cordial spirit of Nahum Tate, "thanks his ingenious friend" for his information! But it is so; in this particular our Mandarin fails in comparison with the Cossack and with Nahum Tate.

We now lay before the reader the Essay of Ching the

Mandarin, who, it will be seen in his orders to the painter employed to copy the original picture—by whom taken to China remains unknown—has, with national exactness, given the birth and education not only of the author of Falstaff, but of Falstaff himself, together with glancing notices of—Windsor wives and Windsor soap.

It is, perhaps, only due to the translator, to state that by our express solicitation he has a little lowered the orientalism of the original, whilst he has at the same time endeavoured to preserve the easy, conversational tone of the educated Chinese.

"Ching to Ting.

"I send, O Ting, from the barbarian ship, a picture of barbarians. Make one for your friend, like unto it; in size, in shape, and colour, even the same. But why should I waste words with Ting, whose pencil is true as the tongue of Confutzee? No; I will straightway deliver to him all my studies have made known to me of the barbarians, written on the canvass before him; for how can even Ting paint the faces of barbarians in their very truth, if he know not the history not only of themselves but of their fathers?

"The he barbarian with the big belly was called Forlstoff, and in time was known as Surgeon Forlstoff: from which, there is no doubt, he was a skilful leech in the army of the barbarian king, more of whom in good season. Forlstoff's father was one Shak, or Shake, Speare or Spear; for there have been great tumults among the barbarians about the *e*. In nothing does the ignorance of the English barbarians more lamentably discover itself than in the origin they obstinately give to their Shakspeare; who, according to them, was, like the great Brahme, hatched in an egg on the bank of a river, as may be seen in a thousand idle books in which he is called the 'swan of Haveone.' And this conceit was further manifested in the building of a place called 'the Swan Theatre,' where the barbarians were wont to worship. There is little

known of Shakspeare's wife, Forlstoff's mother, and that little proves her to have been an idle person, given to great sleep and sloth, as is shewn by her getting nothing at the death of her husband but his 'second-best bed.'

"If Forlstoff would not, at a later time of life, leave off stealing, there is little doubt that he owed the fault to his father Shakspeare, who was forced to fly to London, which is a sacred city for all thieves, for having stolen an antelope, an animal consecrated to the higher kind of barbarians, and which it is death for the poor to touch. Indeed, the flesh of the antelope is to be eaten with safety by very few of the barbarians, it having killed even many of their Eldermen immediately after dinner.

"When Shakspeare came to London he was poor and without friends, and he held the horses of the rich barbarians who came to worship at a temple on the banks of the river. In time he learned to make shoes for the horses; and in such esteem are the shoes still held by the barbarians, that they are bought at any price, and nailed at the threshold of their houses and barns; for where they are nailed, the foolish natives think no fire, no pestilence will come, and no evil thing have any strength. Such is the silly idolatry of the barbarians.

"At length Shakspeare got admitted into the temple; and there he shewed himsef master of the greatest arts; and he wrote charms upon paper which, it is said, will make a man weep or laugh with very happiness,—will bring spirits from the sky and devils from the water,—will open the heart of a man and shew what creeps within it,—will now snatch a crown from a king, and now put wings to the back of a beggar. And all this they say Shakspeare did, and studied not. No, beloved Ting, he was not like Sing, who, though but a poor cowherd, became wise by poring on his book spread between the horns of his cow, he travelling on her back.

"And Shakspeare proceeded in his marvels, and he became rich; and even the queen of the barbarians was seen to smile

at him, and once, with a burning look, to throw her glove at him; but Shakspeare, it is said, to the discomfiture of the queen, returned the glove, taking no further notice of the amatory invitation.

"In a ripe season of his life, Shakspeare gave up conjuring, and returned to the village on the banks of the river Haveone, where, as it is ignorantly believed, he was hatched, and where he lived in the fulness of fortune. He had laid down his conjuring rod and taken off his gown, and passed for nothing more than a man, and it is said—though you, beloved Ting, who see the haughty eyes and curling noses of the lesser man mandarins, can, after what I have writ of Shakspeare, hardly believe it—thought himself nothing more.

"Shakspeare built himself a house and planted a tree. The house is gone, but the barbarians preserve bricks of it in their inner chambers, even—I tremble as I pen it—as we preserve the altars of our gods.

"The tree was cut down by a fakir in a brain fever, but the wood is still worshipped. And this, O Ting! I would not ask you to believe, had not your own eyes witnessed that wonderful tree,* the leaves whereof falling to the ground, become mice! Hence, learn, that the leaves of Shakspeare's mulberry have become men, and on a certain day every year, with mulberry boughs about their heads, their bodies clothed in their richest garments, they chant praises to the memory of Shakspeare, and drink wine to his name.

"Shakspeare—Forlstoff's father, and the father of a hundred lusty sons and daughters, such as until that time had never been born, Shakspeare—died! He was buried in a chest of cedar, set about with plates of gold. On one of these plates was writ some magic words; for thieves, breaking into the grave, were fixed and changed to stone; and are now to be seen even as they were first struck by the charm of the magi-

* See Navarrete's "China" for the account of this tree; underneath which, we humbly suggest, it would be as well to keep a cat.

cian. And so much, beloved Ting, of Shakspeare, Forlstoff's father."

That our Mandarin has herein displayed very popular abilities for the difficult task of a commentator, no one who has read many volumes of Shaksperian commentaries will, we believe, deny. It is observable that in many instances he makes his facts; a custom of particular advantage to the indulgence of the most peculiar opinions and conclusions. We have read some writers who, deprived of this privilege, would really have nothing to write upon. The pleasure of making a giant, great as it possibly may be, cannot be comparable to the delight of killing him, our own handiwork. If, however, our reader will bear with us, we will proceed with the labours of Ching on the character of Falstaff, and on those personages and events, directly and indirectly, associated with his glorious name. Falstaff in China! Jack Falstaff on a regimen of rice!

"Forlstoff was born in the third hour of the morning; and at his birth, the roundness of his belly, and the whiteness of his head, betokened his future greatness. But little is known of his early life; save that he assisted in the temples of the barbarians, where his voice, once remarkable for its sweetness, became broken with the zeal of the singer. He then travelled with a juggler; and—if lying were not the especial vice of the barbarians—did greater wonders than even our own Yiyi. The Eldermen of London—so named, because chosen from the oldest inhabitants—are known by a ring upon the thumb; this ring, Forlstoff, to the admiration of the barbarian court, crept through and through like any worm, and was promoted by the king therefore. I should, however, do evil unto truth did I not advise you, O Ting, that this feat of Forlstoff seems greater than it really is: for a tame eagle being kept in the court of the king, it was afterwards discovered that a talon of the bird was something thicker than the waist of the said Forlstoff.

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* See Navarrete

"It is certain that Foristoff a short time after his feat with the ring, became a student in a place called Clemency Inn; which, as its name implies, is a temple wherein youths study gentleness, mercy and mercifulness, to love all men as brothers of one sex and kind, and to despise the allurements of wealth. There was with him another student, called Robert Shaller, who afterwards became a Mandarin, or, in the barbarian tongue, a justice of the peace; being promoted to that office because he was like a double ostrich, and had his head carved with knife. He was, when at Clemency Inn, drest in an eel-skin suit and used to sleep in a lute-case. He lent Foristoff what sometimes call a thousand pounds, which Foristoff was exceedingly thankful for.

Now had Foristoff in company with one Princeal—the son of the barbarian king, and several thieves. Foristoff—the grandson of his father, Shakspeare, breaks out in the [illegible] king's son to turn robber. He is, however, [illegible] of his wickedness, that he goes about it with a [illegible] as a king's son ought.

[illegible] in disgrace with Princeal, and is sent by [illegible] to Coventry; that being a place in the barbarous [illegible] as men speaks to his neighbour. After [illegible] Foristoff marches through Coventry, to fight one [illegible] on a straight hill, and is therefore called [illegible] Hotspur. Hotspur had fain with him by—that is, swear a clock, [illegible] Percy Hotspur, the king's son, meanly endeavouring [illegible] of the honour.

[illegible] is dine with the king at [illegible] ory he says. Foristoff [illegible] ness, and is put by [illegible] n, a hack-basket,—that [illegible] barians, their word Jack [illegible] ng high, handsome, grand. [illegible] saved himself by swimming to [illegible] pointed, by being turned into

the royal forest with horns upon his head, and chains upon his hands. Princeal, in time, becomes king, and discards Forlstoff, who goes home—goes to bed—does nothing but look at the ends of his fingers, talks of the green fields about Wincer, and dies.

"For the habits of Forlstoff, if they were not quite as virtuous as those of Fo, it was, perhaps, the fault of his times; for we have his own words to prove that they were once those of the best barbarians. He swore but few oaths—gambled but once a day—paid his debts four times—and took recreation only when he cared for it. He loved sack—a liquor that has puzzled the heads of the learned — without eggs, and was extraordinarily temperate in bread.

"His companions were thieves of the highest repute—but all, unhappily, died, and left no sons!

"You will now, oh, wise and virtuous Ting, directed by these few and feeble words, paint me the picture of Forlstoff and his two wives."

We put it to the impartial reader whether Ching, in the above estimate of the character of Falstaff, has not entitled himself to take rank with many Shakspearian commentators; and whether, if the foreign minister will not consent to ship a company of English actors to Canton, Ching should not be invited by the patrons of the British drama to preside in a London theatre.

MY HUSBAND'S "WINNINGS."

Most men in something cheat their wives.—*The Honeymoon.*

"THERE, Mary, my love, take my winnings," said Mr. Joseph Langshawe; at the same time laying a sovereign and a sixpence upon the breakfast-table.

"Won again, Joseph!" cried Mrs. Langshawe, with one of her prettiest looks of astonishment. "Won again!"

"Take my winnings," repeated Mr. Langshawe; and, suppressing a sigh, he languidly stirred his coffee.

The reader may be assured that, for a winning man, Mr. Joseph Langshawe had one of the longest faces out of Chancery: yet, at the time at which our story commences, he appeared to his wife the chosen of good fortune; there never was such a lucky man! It seemed enough for him to touch the cards to turn them to trumps. Joseph Langshawe had won again!

Certainly the continued prosperity of Langshawe was to his wife marvellous: he never sat down to cards that he did not rise money in pocket. Had Joseph made a terrible compact with that crafty general dealer who continually roams about the earth, seeking cheap pennyworths? Had he trucked his immortal jewel for pasteboard diamonds as he chose to evoke them in this world? Had he surrendered himself to the great demon for a magical influence over tens, and fives, and sequences? In a word, was Joseph Langshawe become the fated Faust of five-card cribbage? Mysterious fears of future evil mingled in the marvellings of Mrs. Langshawe!

"When I think of Joseph's continued good fortune,"

observed Mrs. Langshawe to a female friend, "I own to you it sometimes make me tremble."

"Why, my dear?" asked Mrs. Bridgeman. "Why? I thought you told me, that, like a good creature as he is, he always gave you his winnings."

"And so he does," replied Mrs. Langshawe, "invariably."

"What a good soul!" exclaimed Mrs. Bridgeman. "Dear fellow! it proves him so free from any selfish motives—shews that he merely plays for innocent excitement. And does Langshawe never lose?"

"Never," replied Mrs. Langshawe: "and it is that which makes me so very unhappy."

"Makes you unhappy! Well, you are the strangest creature," cried Mrs. Bridgeman.

"That is," rejoined Mrs. Langshawe, "when I fear that his continued good luck may some day tempt him to play for a ruinous sum: for it is impossible, my dear, that such fortune as Joseph's can last. I should be so happy if he'd never touch a card again."

"Why, you bought that beautiful chain, and your diamond drops, and all out of your husband's winnings," exclaimed Mrs. Bridgeman.

"Very true," allowed Mrs. Langshawe; and then she repeated, with a deep sigh, "but such fortune as Joseph's *can't* last."

Certain we are that the reader, after some further acquaintance with Langshawe, would not wish Joseph's fortune to continue. A brief extract from the conversation of the night previous to the presentation of the sovereign and sixpence may explain the mystery of Langshawe's winnings.

"Well, Langshawe," cried a friend from an opposite table, as Joseph rose to go home, "how have you fared to-night?"

"As usual," said Joseph, and he tried to whistle; "as usual —there's no standing Bridgeman's luck."

"What!" exclaimed Fourpoints, "lost again? why you always lose."

"I should say always," replied Joseph; "never mind—it's all right; yes, I've just enough;" and Langshawe held in his hand a sovereign, a half-crown, and a sixpence.

"Brought down to that, eh?" asked Flush, looking at the three pieces of coin.

"All that's left," answered Langshawe, "out of five-and-twenty pounds. Never mind, there's just enough; half-a-crown will pay for my coach home, and then—yes, that will make a very good show;" and Joseph surveyed at a distance the little piece of gold and lesser piece of silver in his palm; "a very good show for my winnings."

"Winnings!" exclaimed a new member of the club—"winnings! I thought, Sir, you had nothing but losses?"

"That's very true, Sir," replied Langshawe; "notwithstanding, I always make it a point in my domestic economy, whatever my losses may be, to take home my profits to my wife. "You perceive," and Joseph exhibited the coin, "when the coach is paid, although I've lost to Bridgeman nearly four-and-twenty pounds, here's just a sovereign and a sixpence for my winnings."

"A sixpence! why be so particular with the sixpence?" inquired the new member.

Mr. Joseph Langshawe looked one of his gravest looks in the face of the new member, and, after a compassionate shake of the head, observed, "I should say, Sir, you were a bachelor—I should say, pardon me if I'm wrong, that as yet you knew nothing of conjugal confidence, otherwise you would perceive that the sixpence was a—a clincher."

"A clincher!" repeated the simple new member.

"The sovereign by itself," observed Joseph, "might appear suspicious; but don't you perceive there's a reality in odd money? Mrs. Langshawe will see truth, Sir, truth in the tester."

And the next morning, as we have already shewn, Joseph handed over to the partner of his worldly goods a sovereign and a sixpence—his winnings!

"And who played last night?" asked Mrs. Langshawe—we must again ask the reader's attendance at the breakfast-table —"who played? Bridgeman?"

"Bridgeman," answered Joseph, shortly.

"My dear Joseph," said Mrs. Langshawe, very gravely, "I wish you'd exert the influence of a friend over Bridgeman; he confesses nothing to his wife, poor dear woman!—but I'm sure his losses must be very heavy. Everybody hasn't your good fortune, Joseph."

Langshawe buried that expressive feature, his mouth, and half his nose, in his tea-cup.

"It would make me truly unhappy, Joseph, if I thought you had won any of his money," said Mrs. Langshawe.

"Make yourself perfectly easy on that point, my dear," said Langshawe, internally wincing at the absurd suspicion; "my hands are clean of Bridgeman, though I played with him."

"I'm delighted to hear it," cried Mrs. Langshawe. "And now, Joseph, if you'll promise me to leave off play altogether——"

"I have serious thoughts of it," said Joseph——

"You'll make me completely happy. For depend upon it, as I have said again and again, your present fortune can't last."

"I've thought so, too," said Langshawe; who might have added, "and that's why I have gone on."

"And if you give up cards, perhaps the example may have a good effect upon Bridgeman; for the Bridgemans are not like us, Joseph; they want, I fear, that mutual confidence in one another, without which marriage must be——"

"To be sure, my dear," said Langshawe, acutely anticipating his wife's period—"to be sure. No—I shall give up play."

"I hope you will—I sincerely hope," said Mrs. Langshawe, as she took up the sovereign and the sixpence, "that this will be the last of your winnings."

Noon had scarcely passed, ere a passionate knocking at the

door of the Langshawes announced a visitor. "Bless me! yes, it is—it is dear Mrs. Bridgeman," said Mrs. Langshawe, with mingled surprise and pleasure, as she heard the silvery voice of her friend on the staircase, "Dear Mrs. Bridgeman!"

As the visitor was introduced, Mrs. Langshawe jumped from her chair to run and kiss her best acquaintance, when Mrs. Bridgeman smiled somewhat severely, half-dropped a curtsey, put her hand to her brow, and sank into a seat.

"What's the matter, dear?" asked Mrs. Langshawe.

Mrs. Bridgeman entered into no details of her complaint, but simply observed, "I shall be better presently."

"Anything happened at home?" inquired Mrs. Langshawe. "How's Bridgeman?"

Hath the reader beheld the countenance of an invalid when prescribed a certain drug, of all drugs his worst abhorrence? Hath the reader himself felt the cold shiver running through his vitals, twisting the very tips of his toes—the indescribable nausea that hath puckered up his countenance divine, and given his head a shake of most expressive loathing? Any one so experienced, would have thought from Mrs. Bridgeman's manner that Mrs. Langshawe had spoken, it might be, of rhubarb, and not of Bridgeman—of asafœtida, perhaps, and not of a husband.

"I hope he's well?" said Mrs. Langshawe, anxiously.

"I believe Mr. Bridgeman is very well," said his wife; "but you know he never tells me anything. Yes, last night I did gather from him that he played at cards only with Mr. Langshawe."

"So Joseph told me," observed the innocent Mrs. Langshawe.

"You are blest with a fortunate husband," said Mrs. Bridgeman, drily. "Some people, it is plain, are born with lucky fingers."

"I'm afraid it is so: however, Joseph has almost promised me never, never to play again."

"'Twill be a happy circumstance for some of his friends," remarked Mrs. Bridgeman, significantly.

"If, however, he will play and win, I am resolved—for it lies heavily upon my conscience to spend the money upon myself—I am determined to devote the money to some benevolent purpose: and, since the thought has taken me, I am so delighted that you are come to advise me. What do you think, my dear Mrs. Bridgeman," and Mrs. Langshawe drew herself nearer to her friend; "what do you think of the Society for the Conversion of the Jews?"

"Do you intend to subscribe Mr. Langshawe's winnings of last night to that estimable body?" asked Mrs. Bridgeman, biting her lips.

"How kind the suggestion!" exclaimed Mrs. Langshawe. "What a good creature you are! I did not think to do so, but now I certainly shall."

"For five-and-twenty pounds," said Mrs. Bridgeman, with a terrible smile; "no doubt you may be a life governess."

"For five-and-twenty pounds!" cried Mrs. Langshawe, laughingly.

"The losses of Mr. Bridgeman last night," remarked his wife: "he played with Mr. Langshawe, and I presume, as usual, the fortunate man gave you his winnings." This was said in a cold, cutting tone, sharp enough to sever every silver tie of female friendship.

"My dear Mrs. Bridgeman, there must be some mistake. Joseph gave me his winnings, certainly, but they were only a sovereign——"

"A sovereign!" exclaimed Mrs. Bridgeman, contemptuously.

"And a—sixpence," added Mrs. Langshawe, with her usual meekness.

"And a sixpence! A sovereign and a sixpence! My dear," said Mrs. Bridgeman, with awakened sympathy, "you are a deceived, an injured woman."

"Do you really think so?" asked Mrs. Langshawe, unconscious of the calamity.

"Mr. Langshawe won five-and-twenty pounds—I have secret but certain means of knowing—of poor innocent Bridgeman: five-and-twenty pounds, Madam; and the crafty man makes his winnings a sovereign and a—a——well, the effrontery of some people! And had you no suspicion of your husband's falsehood? Why, that very sixpence—the affected scrupulousness of the thing—would have made me doubt him. My love, I have seen more of the marriage state than you, and I know that men are never so very particular, except when they mean to deceive us."

"I 'm sure I can't see why Joseph should misrepresent his winnings. I don't see the motive," said the artless Mrs. Langshawe.

"Perhaps not, my love; perhaps not. How should you know what he does with all his money? It 's plain he has some object in deceiving you," was the charitable opinion, expressed with more than sufficient force, of Mrs. Bridgeman.

"It would really seem so," said Mrs. Langshawe, almost trembling at her doubts.

"Be sure of it," said Mrs. Bridgeman; "you hav'n't a twentieth part of his winnings; and where they go——"

"Many pardons," cried Langshawe, who had suddenly opened the door; "trust I break upon no secrets. How's Bridgeman?"

Mrs. Bridgeman looked at one hand then at the other, and, with an effort, said, "I hope—that is, very well."

"Where are you going, love?" asked Langshawe, as his wife moved towards the door.

"Entertain Mrs. Bridgeman for a minute; I'll return directly," said Mrs. Langshawe; for she felt her eyes filling with tears as she looked upon Joseph, and thought of his duplicity, the sovereign and the sixpence.

"Bridgeman very well, eh?" said Langshawe, in his easy, pleasant style.

"All things considered, remarkably well," answered Mrs. Bridgeman.

"Nothing happened?" inquired Langshawe, struck by the serious manner of the lady. "Eh! bless me! all right at home I hope?—no domestic loss—no——"

"Some people, Mr. Langshawe, would call it one. Mr. Bridgeman's income, though sufficient for all reasonable enjoyments, is hardly adequate to the calls made by cards upon it, together with the constant good fortune of his bosom friends."

"Bridgeman plays now and then, to be sure," said Langshawe, in mollifying voice, "but then he always wins."

"Wins!" exclaimed Mrs. Bridgeman; "you know—better than anybody, you know—that last night he lost five-and-twenty pounds."

"Is it possible?" cried Langshawe.

"Possible!" echoed the lady. "Losing would seem a matter of certainty when he plays with some people. It is as certain for Mr. Bridgeman to lose as for Mr. Langshawe to win."

Langshawe, hurt by the words, yet more by the piercing looks of Mrs. Bridgeman, resolved to clear himself of the odium of constant success. With this determination, first glancing towards the door, he took the lady's hand. "My dear Mrs. Bridgeman, I'm sure you can keep a secret."

The compliment at once disarmed Mrs. Bridgeman: she, too, looked towards the door, and then said, "I can, Mr. Langshawe."

"Then, between ourselves, my dear Madam," said Langshawe, in a low, soft voice, "I never win."

"Never win, Mr. Langshawe!——"

"Never. The truth is, Mary—bless her!—is such a rigid economist in everything that concerns herself—is so averse to laying out a shilling upon the smallest trinket, that I am compelled to use a little harmless deceit, to induce her to commit the least expense."

"Then your winnings last night, Mr. Langshawe?——"

"Quite apocryphal, I assure you—all, what I may call," said Langshawe, "a conjugal fiction."

"Mr. Langshawe," said Mrs. Bridgeman, with a subdued fierceness that made Joseph stare, "a man may from habit consider himself justified in attempting the most unblushing fraud upon his own wife—habit goes far, in all matters—but, Sir, that you should hold my common sense in so contemptuous a light——"

"My dear Madam, I protest," exclaimed Langshawe, colouring to the eyelids; "I protest that I have the profoundest sense of——"

"Adds, Sir—adds to the meanness of your first duplicity. You know that Mr. Bridgeman, your dear friend, as you are pleased to call him, last night lost five-and-twenty pounds."

"I vow I know nothing of the matter," cried Joseph.

"And more, and worse than all, that Mr. Langshawe was the winner."

"Now, my dear Mrs. Bridgeman," said Joseph, almost amused at the extravagance of the charge, he himself having been the sufferer,—"it is very true that I spoke of winnings to Mary—I——"

"I know, Sir—I know; one piece of gold and a sixpence. Mr. Langshawe," cried Mrs. Bridgeman, for a lady, very sternly—"I am astounded at your double falsehood—I blush for your meanness—I——"

Langshawe could say nothing. For the first time he regretted that he had ever appeared to his wife a winning man.

"Mr. Langshawe," exclaimed Mrs. Bridgeman, with new energy, "may I solicit of you one—a last—favour?"

"Twenty, my dear Mrs. Bridgeman," answered the obliging Joseph.

"One—one will suffice, Mr. Langshawe. Promise me never to play with my unfortunate husband again. Heaven knows what his losses may have been! His poor wife knows nothing. But where there are great winnings, there must consequently be—you understand me, dear Mr. Langshawe?"—and Mrs. Bridgeman tried to forget her passion, and to smile

Langshawe into acquiescence. "Poor Bridgeman," she added in a very equivocal tone, "is really no match for you. You are—you know you are—I hear it upon all hands—such an invincible player; whilst simple Bridgeman in the vanity of his heart thinks himself your equal. Now, do, pray take pity of his weakness—don't, don't play with him;" and Mrs. Bridgeman solicited the compassion of Langshawe, as she would have entreated the mercy of a highwayman: indeed, despite of the peculiarity of Joseph's winnings, he felt himself before Mrs. Bridgeman somewhat in the situation of a pick-pocket. "There is a fate about you," said Mrs. Bridgeman —"as might be said of Macbeth, you bear 'charmed' cards —therefore, do spare my silly man—do spare——"

"Mr. Bridgeman," said the servant, opening the door.

"Bridgeman!" cried his wife and Langshawe.

"My mistress is with him, Sir," said the domestic, and disappeared.

It was too true. Whilst Mrs. Bridgeman and Mr. Langshawe had been left to conversation, Mrs. Langhawe and Mr. Bridgeman—the gentleman entered the house as Mary quitted Joseph—had discoursed of the gain and loss of the preceding evening.

"Mr. Bridgeman, I am so glad you're come," said the gentle Mrs. Langshawe. "Your dear wife is up stairs."

"Indeed!" observed Bridgeman, very tranquilly; he then asked—"how's Langshawe?"

"Very well; he's with your lady. Oh! Mr. Bridgeman, I cannot express to you how much I am annoyed at the circumstance of last night."

Mr. Bridgeman put his hand to his chin, gently exalted his shoulders, and spoke not.

"I wish to my heart that Joseph would not play, for his fortune is so extraordinary," said Mrs. Langshawe.

Now, as Mr. Bridgeman was fully aware that, although Joseph always lost to him, he invariably, as in the case of the

sovereign and the sixpence, took home winnings to some amount to Mrs. Langshawe, he did not feel quite at ease in his present situation with that lady. "Fortune," he endeavoured to observe, "does act extraordinary with Langshawe."

"And then there is something to me so uncomfortable, to say the least of it, in winning money of our friends;" and Mrs. Langshawe looked innocently in the perturbed face of Bridgeman.

"Cards are like love, Mrs. Langshawe, as I take it; friends are not to be considered in the matter," replied the impartial Bridgeman.

"I can't think so. I think there is something almost mean and sordid in these continual attempts on the purse of those for whom we profess an esteem, a friendship," said Mrs. Langshawe.

Mr. Bridgeman, with the weight of many pounds of his friend Langshawe about the neck of his conscience, began to think the interview less pleasant than it might have been. It was plain, however, from her looks, that Mrs. Langshawe expected some reply; therefore Mr. Bridgeman nodded his head affirmatively.

"But the worst of all is, Mr. Bridgeman," said Mrs. Langshawe, with animation, "that falsehood, positive falsehood, comes of the practice. Never—never before has Joseph deceived me!" (Poor little dear!) "And now I have found him capable of the least deceit—of—misrepresentation in the simplest thing — it has made me truly wretched. Without mutual confidence, Mr. Bridgeman, there can be no happiness in the marriage state."

Mr. Bridgeman bowed very solemnly—perhaps it was so.

"To be sure, he may have been ashamed of the sum — really, too much to win of anybody, and, more than all, of a friend."

"Has Langshawe really confessed to having lost? Did he bring home *no* winnings?" thought Bridgeman.

"Tell me, pray tell me, Mr. Bridgeman, was not the loss between you last night five-and-twenty pounds?"

Mrs. Langshawe's manner had so surprised Bridgeman — her sudden energy had so confused him, that the colour rose to his face, and he began to stammer, as he thought—"It's plain, Joseph has confessed his losses—it's plain——"

"Five-and-twenty pounds?" again pressed Mrs. Langshawe.

"Not—not quite," answered Bridgeman.

"It is true, then," cried Mrs. Langshawe; "Mrs. Bridgeman is right!"

"Mrs. Bridgeman!" said her husband.

"It was she who told me the real amount of money lost, and not Mr. Langshawe. That Joseph should have won nearly five-and-twenty pounds of you—of you, his old, his early friend! I shall hardly know how to look in Mrs. Bridgeman's face again—I shall——"

To the inexpressible relief of Bridgeman—who, really being the winner of his friend's money, felt with double acuteness the reproaches inveighed against the innocent — Langshawe entered the apartment—Mrs. Langshawe as instantly quitting it.

"Bridgeman," said Langshawe, in a low voice, and with an accusing shake of the head, "this is really very wrong."

"There's something wrong, somewhere," replied Bridgeman.

"My dear fellow," cried Langshawe, "if you wanted to account for five-and-twenty pounds to your wife, you needn't have laid the loss upon my shoulders."

"I account to Mrs. Bridgeman! I lose five-and-twenty pounds! 'T was just my winnings. The fact is, Langshawe—not that I am under the influence of my wife——"

"No more am I—not at all—no man less," said Langshawe. "If I have fabled a little as to my winnings, it was out of affection, not fear — no, no, it was to keep Mary happy, and the house quiet—nothing more."

"I was about to say, if you must win large sums of money

you might, out of respect to the feelings of Mrs. Bridgeman, win them of anybody but her husband."

"But I never win large sums; never, never but once, when I told Mary that I had won thirty guineas, because I wanted her to buy a pair of diamond drops, which otherwise she wouldn't consent to purchase. Never a large sum, but then," said Langshawe.

"Nonsense! Mrs. Langshawe feels assured at this minute that you won a large sum of me last night," cried Bridgeman.

"And if she does," replied Langshawe, "it is because Mrs. Bridgeman told her as much; and who told Mrs. Bridgeman I need n't declare to you."

"Langshawe," said Bridgeman, "we have known one another many years, and I should be sorry to quarrel with you."

"Should equally regret it, Bridgeman," answered Langshawe; "but when men can't keep matters like these to themselves—when their wives must be made parties to everything—there's an end of the very principle of manly friendship."

"I think so, too," was the gloomy reply of Bridgeman.

At all events, then, Mr. Bridgeman," said Langshawe, endeavouring to clothe his lengthened face with dignity—"at all events——"

Unhappily, or we should rather say happily, the appearance of the ladies not only cut short the wordy encounter of the gentlemen, but the smiles and beamy looks of the wives suddenly lighted up the faces of their husbands. The ladies requested that nothing more might be said of the matter, and, hoping that their husbands would leave filthy cards for ever, all shook hands, and, at the usual hour, sat down happily to dinner.

Mr. and Mrs. Bridgeman had departed for their home, and Mr. and Mrs. Langshawe still sat at their hearth.

"I forgive you, Joseph, this time, but never tell me a fib again," said the pretty Mrs. Langshawe. "Moreover, if you

must play, promise me not to win of Bridgeman. His wife found out his loss in the oddest way: he had taken out fifty pounds to pay a bill, and returned home—how she discovered that I can't tell—with less than half the money: the bill however, was not paid, for 't was called for before he was up." (The truth is that Bridgeman had not taken the note with him, but replaced it in his desk.) "When she heard that he had played with you, knowing that you always won, she of course concluded that you had the money. And how naughty of you to tell me such a tale about a sovereign, and——but I have promised not to scold you;" and Mrs. Langshawe patted the blushing cheek of Joseph.

"She's a very violent woman, Mrs. Bridgeman," said Langshawe.

"Very: I was quite surprised at her passion—besides, it shewed an avarice that—O Joseph! I would 'nt have had you keep those winnings for any consideration."

"Keep them! Why—eh?—Mrs. Bridgeman seemed suddenly in excellent spirits—you never returned the money—you——"

"Not exactly the money, Joseph," said Mrs. Langshawe, who smiled with some meaning.

Mr. Langshawe gaped, stared, and said, "Not exactly money—what then?"

"O! I hit upon an excellent plan. You know my diamond drops, that I bought of your winnings?"

"Thirty guineas!" cried Joseph Langshawe, turning a little pale.

"Mrs. Bridgeman was always admiring them. So to-day, whilst you and her husband were alone, after a little persuasion, I induced Mrs. Bridgeman—to accept them."

"You did, Mary?"

"I did, Joseph!" said Mrs. Langshawe, delighted at her dexterity.

"Your diamond drops!" cried Langshawe.

"And as they cost thirty guineas, and as last night you took less than five-and-twenty of Bridgeman, why, his wife having the diamonds, you may now be said to have won less than nothing," said Mrs. Langshawe.

"Much less," groaned Joseph.

We believe, though we cannot vouch for him, that from that time Langshawe forswore cards. Of this, however, we are certain; if he did play, Mrs. Langshawe was never again perplexed with her—"husband's winnings."

THE "LORD OF PEIRESC."

THERE are readers who may, possibly, prepare themselves to receive the "Lord of Peiresc" as the hero of a tale of chivalry, of old romance—of a story, full of the marvels of the world in its simplicity of age, when the dreams of the fabulist were a part of the realities of life, imparting to life its characteristic tone and colour. We hasten to disappoint such, assuring them that "Nicholas Claudius Fabricius, Lord of Peiresc," was really and truly a denizen of this world—a man with a heart brimful of love towards his fellows—a man who was at once a pattern of the gentleman, the nobleman, and the scholar. Nothing can be more beautiful than the details of his long, amiable, and useful life, as written with affectionate regard by his friend Petrus Gassendus; and, believing that the taste of the general reader is not yet become too vitiated by the sugared nothings of many of our present phrasemongers, to relish the fine homeliness of the early biographer, we shall, in due course, proceed to select from him two or three passages, in which, by a few artless strokes of truth, the "Lord of Peiresc" is painted to the life; in which he looks, and moves, and has his being.

We have three reasons for attempting the present paper. The first is the real interest appertaining to the subject; the second arises from a hope of winning a reverent attention to an all-but-forgotten name; the third, from a belief that the biography of Peiresc is not commonly met with, and, at a first glance, may seem to promise but meagre entertainment to the general reader. There is, we allow, some husk about the book: but it possesses a kernel, sweet and toothsome to those who

have fed at the simple, healthy tables of the old writers, and have drunk purity and strength from their maple cups. Sterne glances laughingly at Peireskius, and D'Israeli, in his "Curiosities," has a passage in honour of his scholarly sagacity; but we know of no book, no essay which has, in popular form, exhibited the kindliness, the simplicity, and the utility of the sage and the philosopher, to the admiration of the general reader. And yet was Peiresc the friend and correspondent of the worthiest Englishmen—Camden, Selden, Sir Robert Cotton, Spelman, Harvey, John Barclay, and others. Throughout France, Holland, and Italy, he was sought for and honoured by all the learned; the sweetness of his disposition, and the innocency of his manners, endearing him to men of every shade of faith. Peiresc, as limned by Gassendus, is the living picture of a scholar of the seventeenth century; of a man rising above the superstition of his time, yet with a mind slightly tinged by the romantic spirit of his age. We see in Peiresc the hearty struggle between new-born inquiry and ancient dogma: his mind boldly asserts itself in natural speculation, when not narrowed and hampered by the tyranny of early teaching. For instance, in 1608, it was reported by the husbandmen that a shower of blood had fallen, which "divines judged was a work of the devils and witches, who had killed innocent young children." This, however, Peiresc "counted a mere conjecture, *possibly* also injurious to the goodness and providence of God," and therefore sought for a natural solution to the seeming wonder. An incredible number of butterflies had preceded this "red rain." Peiresc shut up "a certain palmer-worm which he had found, rare for its bigness and form." In due time "the worm turned into a very beautiful butterfly, which presently flew away, leaving in the bottom of the box a *red drop* as broad as an ordinary sous." He thus satisfactorily accounts for the shower of blood; doubtless to the discomfiture of those who, benefiting by the ignorance of their hearers, might have turned it to a profitable account.

There was, it appears, a shower of blood in the time of Childebert—in the time of king Robert; that is, if we may take the comment of Gassendus on the discovery of Peiresc, there were in those seasons innumerable butterflies. However, the intelligence that enabled Peiresc to defeat Superstition in its "showers of blood," did not serve him to snatch "sorcerers" from its wild and cruel hands. It was his opinion that "though magicians have not so much commerce with the devil as is supposed, yet ought they to be punished for their *bad mind*." For the signs, the *stigmata* by which the sorcerer was popularly known, Peiresc doubted their genuineness: "they might be natural, and belong to some peculiar of that disease which is termed elephantiasis." Our philosopher was doubtless wrought into this opinion by the agonies of a priest of Marseilles "accused of magic, but freed by the court, having been first *pricked all the body over*, to find out those same insensible places stigmatised by the devil, which could nowhere be discovered." What a melancholy, though instructive lesson is this! Peiresc, the humane, enlightened philosopher, a cold advocate for the accused sorcerer; the champion of light bearing witness for darkness! This was in 1608; some years, it is true, before the appearance of our own Sir Thomas Browne at Bury St. Edmunds; the destroyer of "Vulgar Errors," Error's learned son against his own exploded witches.

Nicholas Claudius Fabricius Peireskius was of noble family, coming, says Gassendus, from the Fabricii of Pisa, who settled in Provence in the time of Saint Louis. He was born in the castle of Beaugensier on the 1st of December, 1580, whither his parents had retired from Aix, in consequence of the plague then raging in that city. His father was a senator of Aix, and his mother, selected for her comeliness by Catherine Medicis to receive "the honour of a kiss," on the Queen Mother's visit to that place, was descended from nobility. Nicholas assumed the name of Peiresc "from a town in his mother's jurisdiction." The following circumstance displays the spirit

of the times. Gassendus says, "His parents having lived together divers years without a child, his mother, for that cause, as soon as she perceived that she was great, took up a resolution that the child's godfather should be no nobleman; but, such was her piety, the first poor man they should meet with!" And so it happened; the poor man giving our scholar the name of Claudius, to which was prefixed, by the special request of his uncle, who hastily arrived at the fount, that of Nicholas. An accident that befel our baby scholar, shews that wicked spirits marked him for their early victim. For—

"It is reported, that when he was hardly two months old, an ancient woman that was a witch, entered the chamber, and threw down before his mother a hatchet which she had in her hand; saying that she had brought it her again."

From what follows, it would appear to have been very dangerous in the year 1580, in Beaugensier, to return a borrowed hatchet: for from the moment the dame brought back the weapon—

"The mother lost her speech, and the child his crying; and both their heads were so depressed upon one shoulder, and held so stiffly in that posture, that they could not bend them." The story says further, "that when his uncle knew it, he caused the old woman to be beaten, who was found in the chimney with her neck upon one of her shoulders, who, as soon as ever she lifted up her head to signify that she had *beating enough*, and to desire them to hold their hands, she said, which appeared to be true, that the mother and the child were both well."

On this, Gassendus sensibly remarks, "doubtless, 'tis a very strange thing that an old hag bowing her own neck, should dart out spirits with so strong a nerve as to turn the head of one distant from her in like manner aside." Perhaps, Sir Kenelm Digby would account for it by the presence of "powder of sympathy," touching the powers of which he made a wise discourse "in a solemn assembly of nobles and

learned men at Montpelier in France." The young Peiresc, despite of all the uncomely old women of Provence, passed through his boyhood unhurt by witchcraft, every day displaying new proofs of that restless curiosity which in after-successes made him the oracle of his contemporaries. No trifle escaped his observation—no accident, however slight, but ministered to his thirst for a knowledge of the principles of things. He is eighteen, "washing himself in the lesser stream of the river Rhodanus," when he finds the ground "which was wont to be even and soft," grown hard, with "little round balls or bunches, like hard boiled eggs when their shell is peeled off." This sets him wondering; but his astonishment is increased "when, after a few days, returning to the river, he finds those little balls or lumps turned into perfect stones." On this he begins to study "the generation of stones." In Italy—for he departs for Rome in his nineteenth year—he sees in a museum "a sprig of coral which grew upon a dead man's skull," and he resolves "to go and see men fish for coral." In his progress to Rome he was entertained by the learned, who wrote verses to him as "the genius of Provence in France." On their own ground, in their own academies, Peiresc was enabled to solve antiquarian doubts, to discover truths and correct errors, to the delight and astonishment of native wise men and philosophers.

"But in what esteem he was in at Padua—(we quote Gassendus)—this one thing does testify; that, whereas the print of a sapphire being sent thither from Augsburg, with an inscription, in which the word *Xiphiæ* did puzzle all the curious antiquarians, Pinellus writ unto him referring unto him the examination and judgment thereof. I omit how he satisfied their doubts and gave light to that word, chiefly from Strabo, who, from Polybius, makes mention of the hunting of the *Xiphia*, which was a sea-monster."

The reputation of young Peiresc reaches the Pope himself: for our scholar and his brother being desirous to see his

Holiness wait upon the poor men "whom he daily feeds," thought of this expedient: they "bought the turns of two poor men, and putting on their clothes, they were present among the rest; and though the Pope knew who they were, yet he pleasantly dissembling his knowledge, and taking no notice of them, they saw all."

Peiresc was in his twenty-third year when he yielded to the oft-repeated desires of his uncle, and received the degree of a doctor; which degree "he carried with so much alacrity and vigour, that did ravish all the bystanders with admiration." Two days after, he conferred the "doctoral ornaments" upon his younger brother, making a discourse "which filled the minds of his hearers with sweet content;" the argument of which may not be familiar to every reader:—

"For from a certain statue of Metrodorus, with his hat, Arcadian cap and labels, with his philosopher's cloak and ring on his left hand; also from certain statues of Hippocrates with the like cloak and a hood upon it; from a certain inscription of Eubulus Marathonius, and a statue with labels not about his neck, but his head; from the like statues of Plato, Theophrastus, Phavorinus, and others; out of certain Gothic pieces, upon which there were mitres, not much unlike caps; in a word, out of innumerable other monuments, he shewed how the use of these ornaments came from the Greeks to the Latins, and so down to us; and how, from the *philosophers and ancient priests*, it was by degrees introduced among the professors of several sciences in our *modern universities!*"

The degree of doctor is yet upon Peiresc "in its newest gloss," when he receives the king's patent appointing him to the dignity of senator of Aix, his uncle having resigned in his favour. He, however, declines for a time the privileges of the patent, and, "having obtained a delay, he applies his mind to more free studies, to court the sweeter and more delightful muses, to advance good arts, and to help as much as in him lay the promoters of learning." And to these

high, ennobling ends he devoted all his life, waving a profitable match in favour of his brother, and betaking himself to the sea-coast "to search out all the monuments of antiquity, and to get in travel the rarest plants, which were to be sent to the garden of Beaugensier." Our fair readers will, we are certain, be happy to know to whom they owe their "flowering myrtles," with the accident—so prettily told by Gassendus—that led Peiresc to its discovery.

"About this time (1605), when Peiresc went from Marseilles to Beaugensier, he would needs take his way by Castellet to visit the parish priest called Julius, whom he already dearly affected by reason of his ingenuous curiosity. Being by him led a little without the village, they met a muleteer carrying a branch of myrtle with a broad leaf and full flower, such as Peireskius had never seen, nor knew that there was such a thing in nature. Wondering, therefore, at the plant, he would be brought into the middle of the wood where it grew, and caused the same to be taken up, that it might be manured and propagated. * * * * * This I thought good to mention, because a myrtle tree with a full flower was a thing unknown in Europe; and the thanks are due to Peireskius that it is now to be seen in the king's gardens, at Rome, in the Low Countries, and other places."

"In the same year (1605), we find Peiresc at Paris, courted by Thuanus, Isaac Casaubon, and Bagarrius, "keeper of the king's jewel-house of rarities;" to the last of whom our antiquary explained the hitherto unknown inscription on an amethyst, marked with *indents*, "which had long perplexed inquirers." It immediately occurred to Peiresc, "that these marks were nothing more than holes for small nails, which had formerly fastened little *laminæ*, which represented as many Greek letters." Peiresc drew lines from one hole to another, and the amethyst revealed the name of the sculptor! In the following year, Peiresc accompanies the French king's ambassador to England. For the benefit of the thousands

who cross the Channel, we quote the means adopted by our voyager to prevent extreme sea-sickness:—

"Peireskius, to prevent the same in himself, left the rest of the company, and sat by the mainmast, where he was not so sick as they were. The reason being asked, he said there was least agitation in that part of the ship; and that, therefore, he withdrew himself thither, that he might not be stomach sick as the rest were, who, being in the head or stern, were much tossed."

Peireskius is graciously received by James, who "tenderly respected him;" and who desired to have "from his own mouth" the story which had preceded him—of how, drinking with a toper of great reputation, one Doctor Torie, he baffled the drinker by "craftily qualifying" his own wine with water! With James a little humour went a great way, and thus, on a small stock of that much-abused commodity, Peireskius might have passed with the English Solomon as an extraordinary wag. From England our philosopher goes to Amsterdam. Whilst staying at the Hague, "he would not depart until he became acquainted with Hugo Grotius," then a young man. From the Hague, he stept aside to Scheveling, where was the famous flying wagon.

"On my return from Leyden through the Hague (quoth Doctor Slop, *not* Gassendus), I walked as far as Scheveling, which is two long miles, on purpose to take a view of it."

"That's nothing," replied my Uncle Toby, "to what the learned Peireskius did, who walked a matter of five hundred miles, returning from Paris to Scheveling, and from Scheveling to Paris back again, in order to see it, and nothing else."

In 1607, Peiresc assumed the senatorial dignity, when he so executed "his office, that nothing was found wanting him," and still was left to him time enough "to study good arts, and to maintain his correspondence with learned men." At the latter end of this year, he lost his Uncle Claudius, whose "most faithful dog followed the corse all along, stood wailing

upon the bier, could not for many days be gotten from the tomb, and after he was brought back to the house, stood a long time still *before his picture.*" (This last touch of affection is not unworthy of the consideration of Landseer. What a mourner would he conjure up by the exquisite magic of his art!) In 1609, Peiresc was affected with a severe fever, when he recovered, as he avers, by eating musk-melons, which in after years became his principal medicine. From this time he busies himself with the coins, weights and measures of the ancients; and whilst engaged in these studies, has a dream, in which he meets with a "goldsmith at Nismes," when the goldsmith offers to sell him a golden piece of Julius Cæsar's coin "for four cardecues," which incident actually occurred to him in his waking hours next day, but which "he reckoned only amongst those rare cases which are wont to amaze the vulgar."

From 1609 until 1630, we find Peiresc in constant communication with the learned of various countries—now deciphering inscriptions—now establishing a weekly post between Beaugensier and Paris—and ever intent upon the introduction of exotics, plants, and fruits into Provence. To him we owe the Chinese jessamine, "first brought from China, planted at Beaugensier, and from thence propagated." It was he who first cultivated in France "the gourd of Mecca, or silk plant, because it bears plenty of threads not unlike silk, fit to weave into stuffs." He planted cocoa-trees, "and saw them bud, but whether through the coldness of the air, or because they were not well looked to, they came not to that perfection which he desired." We next learn that "ginger did wax green in his garden."

"I say nothing (we quote Gassendus) of the broad-leaved myrtle, with the full flower of the storax, and lentisc-tree which yields mastic; and other plants mentioned before. Much less shall I speak of the great American jessamine, with the crimson-coloured flower; nor of the Persian with a violet-coloured flower; nor of the Arabian with a full flower; of the

orange-trees, with a red and parti-coloured flower; of the medlar and sour cherry without stones; Adam's fig-tree, which Peireskius conceived to be one of those which the spies brought back that went to view the land of Canaan; the rare vines which he had from Tunis, Smyrna, Sidon, Damascus, Nova Francia, and other places."

There have been volumes enough, and too many, recording the guilt and madness of conquerors, whose lives were a curse to the bleeding world.—The kind, gentle, enlightened benefactor of his race, who silently makes his foreign conquests grow and blossom in our gardens — who carries away the jessamine captive, and clothes our walks with its beauty, and scents our colder air with its sweetness; who gives to the poor the cheap and lasting luxury of flowers—deserves a grateful memory among men, a memory growing and spreading with his gifts. The victories of the Cæsars are recorded by a few medals, shut up in the cabinets of museums, in the drawers of the virtuoso; the glories of men like Peiresc are still green among us—still glitter with the dews of the morning—still, with their constant sweetness, "scent the evening gale." Nor must we fail to record that the benevolent labours of Peiresc were continued, whilst he suffered acutest tortures from a disease which at last exhausted him. In the Easter of 1631, he was, "sitting without his door, at the entrance of his garden," struck with a sudden palsy, which deprived him of motion and speech. This he suffered for a whole week, when "somebody singing curiously an hymne of the Lives of the Lily and the Rose, he was so taken with the sweetness of the song, and the elegancy of some strain or other, that like the son of Crœsus, desiring to utter some words, and particularly these, 'how excellent is this!' he forthwith uttered them, and at that very moment his limbs were all freed from the palsy." In this year, an extraordinary foreigner arrived at Toulon—no other than an elephant lately exhibited at Rome. Peiresc caused the stranger to be led to Beaugensier, where he took

a cast of his grinders in wax, and had him painted in a lying posture, " that his joints might be seen," to the confusion, we presume, of the sceptics, who denied any such advantages to the quadruped. In 1633, Peiresc entertained " the famous poet Santamantius " at Beaugensier, who had a brother, a traveller, who had seen in Java " live-wights, of a middle nature between men and apes; " whereupon, Peiresc quotes the authority of another traveller, a personal friend and a physician, who had seen in Guinea " apes with long, gray, *combed* beards, almost venerable, who stalk an alderman's pace, and take themselves to be very wise." Our readers may have possibly beheld animals of this species.

In 1634, we find Peiresc studying hard at anatomy, which he follows with a degree of enthusiasm, perhaps not altogether justifiable to the non-professional reader. Smitten by the theory of Asellius with respect to the " milkie veins in the messentery," which " could not be discerned save in a creature living and panting, and that therefore they could not be observed in a man, whom to cut up alive was wickedness, yet did *he did not therefore despair.*" To be brief, a poor wretch condemned to be hanged—before sentence was performed—was by the order of Peiresc " fed lustily and securely," and an hour and a half after death was carried to the theatre of anatomy, where the wished discovery was effected.

Peiresc, having suffered intolerable agony for a month before his decease, died in the sixty-fifth year of his age. The account of his sufferings is written by Gassendus with that graphic simplicity which makes the charm of the book, but which, in deference to this over-nice age, we will not venture to copy. The portrait of the philosopher is in the happiest style of the unaffected biographer.

" He was therefore (to begin with his stature) of a middle and decent pitch, neither too tall, nor over low. The habit of his body was lean, and consequently his veins conspicuous, both in his forehead and hands. His constitution, as it was

subject to diseases, so was it none of the strongest; which made him in his latter years to go with a staff. And for the same reason, his members were easily put out of joint; especially his left shoulder, which was three times dislocated. His forehead was large, and apt to be filled with wrinkles, when he admired anything or was in a deep study. His eyes were gray, and apt to be blood-shotten, by the breach of some little vein. He fixed his eyes either upon the ground, when he was seriously discoursing upon any subject, or upon the auditors, when he perceived they were pleased with what he said. He was a little hawk-nosed; his cheeks being tempered with red, the hair of his head yellow, as also his beard, which he used to wear long. His whole countenance carried the appearance of an unwonted and rare courtesy and affability: however, no painter had the happiness to express him such as he was in deed and in truth."

To our mind this portrait is painted with all the force of life. We see rare old Peireskius; we see the learning and the contemplation of the scholar—in his large forehead, "apt to be filled with wrinkles"—tempered and made gracious by the kindliness of nature and the breeding of a gentleman. He is clearly one of Montaigne's men—a fine specimen of the simple sterling bookmen, with stored skulls and gentle hearts. What a capital contrast is Nicholas Fabricius to the literary coxcomb—

> "Who having whelped a prologue with much pains,
> Feels himself spent, and fumbles for his brains!"

What a relief from the "*pardonnez-mois*" of literature—the be-scented and be-lioned petlings, who spoil "wire-wove" with Babylonish verse and prose—who, drawing their fingers through their raven-locks, swear, "by Gad!" they've "writ a d——d fine book," and vote all men vulgar fools who dare gainsay it. To continue from Gassendus:—

"Though he was careful that the clothes he wore abroad might not be unsuitable to his dignity, yet he never wore silk.

In like manner, the rest of his house he would have adorned according to his condition, and very well furnished, but he did not at all, in a manner, regard his own chamber. Instead of tapestry, there hung *the pictures of his chief friends*, and of famous men. His bed was exceeding plain, and his table continually loaded and covered with papers, books, letters, and other things; as also all the seats round about, and the greatest part of the floor."

In his gardens at Beaugensier he was "delighted with the pleasant verdure of plants, beauty of flowers, gentle murmur and purling noise of brooks and water-streams, together with the various songs of little birds," which, in the winter, we are told, he caused to be fed with corn, forbidding any one to catch or molest them.

"Moreover he preferred the singing of birds before the voices of men or any musical instruments—not but that he was therewith also delighted, but because, after the music that men made, there remained in his mind a *continual agitation, drawing his attention and disturbing his sleep;* the rising, falling, and holding of the notes, with the change of sounds and concords running to and fro in his fancy; whereas no such thing could remain in the bird's music, which [we dispute the 'because' here advanced], because it is not so apt by us to be imitated, it cannot therefore so much affect and stir our inward faculty. He would also, for the same cause, continually breed up nightingales and such like small birds, which he kept also in his own chamber, and of which he was so careful that he learned, by divers signs and tokens, what they wanted or desired, and presently would see them satisfied. They, therefore, as out of gratitude, would sing unto their benefactor hymns of praise; and whereas, in his absence, they were for the most part silent, as soon as ever, by his *voice or staff*, they perceived he was coming, they would fall to singing."

The above presents us with a charming picture of the kind old scholar amidst his books and manuscripts, his medals,

vases, and singing nightingales! There were, however, other inhabitants of the chamber, though we are left unsatisfied as to their conduct towards the minstrels.

"And *reason of mice*, which did gnaw his books and papers in his chamber, he became *a lover of cats*, which he had formerly hated: and whereas, at first, he kept a few for necessity sake, he had, afterwards, a great company for his delight. For he procured out of the East ash-coloured, dun, and speckled cats, beautiful to behold: of the brood whereof he sent to Paris and other places to his friends."

(In this ingenuous avowal of Gassendus there is the germ of a delicious essay. How many a man has become the lover of a cat in some shape—of a cat formerly despised—"by reason" of devouring mice! How many have been brought to endure and love the lesser evil when found to be the only remedy for the greater plague! There was—to quote one instance from a hundred—Jack Spangle, the gay, prodigal Jack Spangle, a fellow shapely and agile as Mercury. He had the loudest laugh, the blackest moustache, and the whitest teeth of any spark of the day. Mrs. Sybil, the rich, withered widow of a scoundrel money-lender, looked feloniously upon him—she was determined to become the wife of Jack Spangle. Jack saw and shuddered at her purpose. O, how Jack Spangle abominated, loathed, anathematized Mrs. Sybil! In the depth and intensity of his hatred he invented new terms of horror and disgust: it was merriment for his friends to hear him swear at the widow Sybil. Three years passed away, and a former companion met Jack and the widow, man and wife. "The fact is, my dear fellow," said Jack, stepping forward to his acquaintance—"the fact is, I lost every farthing I had—was flung by creditors into gaol—had n't a penny to——humph! eh?—I—allow me to introduce you to Mrs. Spangle. Jack was a second "Lord of Peiresc:" we do not mean to assert that he became a devoted lover of his ancient wife; but she was rich, he was penniless and in prison, and he married her "by reason of the mice."

(The "mice" have married many besides Jack and the Widow).

"The Lord of Peiresc" displays, in all his bearings, a finished portrait of the scholar and philosopher of the seventeenth century. There is the simplicity, the modesty, the kindliness of a truly great and well-regulated mind. It is to such men—lightly as their labours may be esteemed by a more imaginative generation — that we owe the greatest benefits. They were the collectors of facts to be employed by their successors—the gatherers of materials to be worked up into a thousand shapes of beauty and utility by those who should follow them. In the time of Peiresc, when the hard student—an anchorite amid his books—was considered by the vulgar as little less than liegeman to a magician, if not a necromancer himself—when the large black dog of the scholar was the *malus genius* of his mysterious and devil-doomed master, our philosopher was peculiarly fortunate in the advantages of birth and means: they afforded him, in station and power, a security and respect among men, not too liberally awarded to the indigent bookman. He was "the lord" of Peiresc, and the patent of the senator gave grace and authority to the investigations of the philosopher.

The purpose of this slight paper has been to beg of the "general reader" a short pause for the consideration of the lineaments of a great, though almost unregarded, benefactor of letters; to take him from the candied conceits of these our most refined and delicate times, to the healthful simplicity of earlier days. Not that, with rash, bigoted judgment, we would sneer at the antiquarians of 1837: there are among them wise, profound teachers; men of great discoveries; men who have seen

> "——— the portrait of a genuine flea,
> Caught upon Martin Luther long ago;"

and will, therefore, walk upon tiptoe to their graves, drawn up by a prodigious sense of their own greatness. Let them have

their "peppercorn of praise;" and let small lecturers to the weariness of boarding-schools, talk their hour of nothings: all we ask is, some passing attention to the early student—the pioneer in the field of letters and of science. Whilst we do not envy, but wonder, at the rich appointments of well-paid sciolists, let us refresh our memory with a view of our old philosopher in his study, and sometimes let our heart "leap up," as cheerfully as his own nightingales, at the staff of the "LORD OF PEIRESC."

CHRISTOPHER SNUB;

WHO WAS "BORN TO BE HANGED."

CHAPTER I.

It was the fixed opinion of the most discriminating inhabitants of the small town of Hempenfield, that Christopher Snub —better known as that incorrigible little scoundrel Kit Snub— was born to be hanged. Such was the public belief, extending and strengthening with the growth of Kit, from his seventh—so early did his genius shew itself—to his seventeenth year; and then, to the sometimes reflecting townsfolk, it seemed somewhat strange that Kit had not been hanged a year or two before. Nevertheless, no man gave up his long-cherished conviction. Kit had, it was true, escaped by miracle; notwithstanding, his doom, though deferred, was certain. Michaelmas would not be more fatal to spring goslings than assizes to Kit. It was a pity, thought two or three of the most charitable folk; for the varlet, bating a certain roguish defiance in his eye, and a bad habit of turning all things into laughter, was a handsome and certainly a goodnatured boy. It was really to be lamented, but Kit Snub *must* be hanged!

Kit was, in truth, the scamp of his birthplace. To the great satisfaction of all fathers and mothers, he was an imp of mischief. It was to them an exceeding comfort if a garden were robbed, glass broken, the decency of a cobbler's stall defiled by tobacco-smoke, henroosts cleared of eggs, or any other social iniquity committed—to know that it was only Kit Snub, and none of their own blessed babes, who could have dreamt of such an atrocity. The very blackness of Kit made all the

other boys of Hempenfield as white as snow. Thus he bore upon his single back all the sins of the rising generation of his native town, and, to the innate wickedness of human nature we must declare it, he skipped as lightly, and laughed as heartily, as though the burden were a grace. Profligate Christopher Snub!

Augustus Doublebrain was a sweet little fellow—a very cherub at full length. He was so civil, so quiet, so meek, so all that a child should be! He had but one fault: he was the companion of Christopher Snub. They played with the same marbles—they flew the same kite—they bit the same apple: that is, when the marbles, the kite, and the apples happened to be Kit's. Otherwise, like "a dear, good child, as he would be without that Snub"—such were oft the words of his wailing mother—Augustus Doublebrain played and munched alone.

And thus much for the childhood of the two companions—thus much for the early wickedness of Christopher Snub.

"You 'll be sorry for this some day," said a young man to the parish beadle; who, at the insinuation, put on a more majestic look—knit three wrinkles in his official brow at the insolent supposition. *He* sorry—the beadle of Hempenfield sorry!

"Innocence is still innocence, abuse it as you will," continued the speaker, the beadle deigning no rejoinder to the stale, insipid truth.

"I wish I may die, then, if I was in the churchyard!" exclaimed the young man.

The beadle made no reply; but, backing a few paces from the speaker, surveyed him with a lofty self-complacency. Vandyke having bestowed a magic touch upon a portrait—Rembrandt having thrown a sunbeam on the canvass—may have glanced at the new beauty with a like swelling of the heart. No artificer so lowly, no drudge so mean, but that he is sometimes proud of his handiwork. The beadle of Hempen-

field felt a flutter at his bosom: he had locked a culprit in the parish stocks, and stood aloof, in brief consideration of his own ability. Reader, the guilty one so stocked was—Kit Snub!

"Times is changed," said the beadle, with melancholy voice, shaking his head at Kit; "times is changed; else this had been whipping, too."

"I wasn't in the churchyard," cried Snub.

"You'll be hanged, Christopher," said the beadle; "the stocks is a halfway house—a resting-place in the way to the gallows; I always said it, and I shall live to see it; you'll be hanged!"

Kit cast a furious look at the prophet, and then, regaining his composure, began to whistle a jig.

"Your character's gone, Christopher; and the sooner you're gone after it the better for Hempenfield. Pitch-and-toss in a churchyard! it's worse," said the beadle, "than Guy Fawkes!"

"For the last time," cried Christopher, "I say I wasn't there."

"Rattling money among the solemn tombstones," continued the beadle, unmoved by the protestations of Snub; "teasing honest folks in their coffins with the mammon of this world—it's a wicked aggravation. How would you like it, Kit?"

Kit whistled.

"And to find nobody better for your wickedness, than a gipsy and a tinker! Have you lost all decency?"

"And why didn't you catch them?" asked Snub. "Then you'd seen that I knew no more on 'em than the owl in the church ivy. But it's always the case—there was always a spite in this place against me."

"People of your kidney always calls justice bad names. Spite, i'fackins! Is there to be no godliness in the world—is heads-and-tails to be allowed in a churchyard? But good words is wasted breath upon you. I'm sorry for it, Kit; for the sake of your dead father—an honest man and the best

bowler fifty miles round—I am sorry for it: but, to be sure, what could be hoped when he married Becky Drinkwater, the chambermaid of the Crown,—when your mother——"

It was especially unfortunate for Simon Scoggs, beadle of Hempenfield, that when in the pursuit of his duty, as *censor morum*, he apprehended Christopher Snub on the charge of playing pitch-and-toss, hustle-cap, and other plebeian games of chance, with a tinker and a gipsy, in the sanctuary of the dead,—it was, we repeat, unfortunate for our vigilant functionary—as the sequel shall prove—that Kit was bound for a cricket-match. The beadle was a man of rigid morals, and thought it a favourable opportunity to indulge in reflections upon the late Mrs. Snub—(there ran a legend, that in her maidenhood she had with some contumely rejected Simon Scoggs)—her son being fast in the stocks. The lion was not defunct, but fast by the legs, when Simon ventured to bray a little. Scarcely, however, had he uttered his first condemnatory note, when he fell—as though struck by the iron club of a giant—upon the earth; a fountain of blood gushing from his nose, defiling his waistcoat, and trickling down his nether garments. Gathering himself bolt upright, the beadle of Hempenfield bled like—like a chancery suitor, or a pig.

Simon Scoggs, his head still swimming, and his eyes striking fire at the same moment, felt his nose and his mistake: he had not searched the person of the culprit; otherwise, in his jacket-pocket he had discovered a cricket-ball, which Kit—he inherited the unerring eye and steady hand of his father—delivered with a precision readily though not cheerfully acknowledged by the beadle; who, for a time, thought his nose had followed the eyes of justice—annihilated by the cricket-ball of Kit.

The reader may hastily imagine that our beadle scrambled to his legs, and with meteor eyes and trumpet-voice assailed his assailant. No housewife — her heart broken with some precious china vessel—ever gathered together the fragmentary porcelain with greater care, with a more sorrowing tenderness,

than did Simon Scoggs, beadle of Hempenfield, pick himself up limb by limb. He seemed to think his nose—like the nose of the seal — was the seat of vitality, and that he must be all but exanimate. At length, a consciousness of protracted existence dawned dimly upon him; when, pulling a deep breath, he shook his head, and a sickly smile of satisfaction played about his mouth as he meekly addressed Christopher Snub in the following words: "Yes, it's a blessed thing to think of—you *must* be hanged."

And Christopher Snub, the last remnant of his good name blown to the winds, sat in the stocks. He felt his innocence, and knew he was a prisoner. Gloomy, desolate thoughts might have fallen on the captive, had he not been weaned from the bitterness of reflection by the society of some half-dozen ragged boys, who, within the very shadow of the stocks, began a game of ring-taw!

("Alas, regardless of their doom,
The little victims play!")

Whereupon, Christopher, who would have brought the same moral energy to a game at push-pin or a game at chess, entered with fullest enjoyment into the sport, counselling, warning, and triumphing with the players. Whether this faculty may be set down to highest philosophy, or to invincible hardness of heart, we leave as matter of argument to moralists. Certain it is, Christopher was in the very heat of the game, when a sound — a dolorous sound—called his attention from the sport. Turning his eyes, he beheld the sorrow-stricken countenance of Augustus Doublebrain.

"I never thought it would come to this, Kit," said Augustus, wringing his hands.

"It's nothing," said Christopher; "I shall be out at sunset. — That won't do, Bill Simmons — knuckle down," cried Christopher, to one of the party at taw.

"Bless us, Kit!" exclaimed Augustus, "can you think of knuckling down in the stocks?"

"And why not?" cried Snub.

"With your character gone," urged Doublebrain—"yes, Christopher—your character!"

"I shall leave the village, and get a new one; for you know Guss, in the matter of character," said Snub, "I can plainly see it—do what you will to keep it whole and sound—luck's all."

"Don't talk in that hardened way," said Augustus Doublebrain.

"Character's like a Sunday hat,—you must play at the ring, Sam Small,—it wears longer with some folks, though they don't take more care of it, than with others."

"You really weren't in the churchyard?" asked Doublebrain, solicitously.

"No; but it was no use my saying so—they said they'd got a witness of it, though what witness I do'nt know; and, more than that, the squire said there was another fact against me."

"The Lord preserve us!" cried Doublebrain. "Another fact!—what is it?"

"Once I was caught at what they call defacing the tombstones; and what, Guss, do you think they call defacing?—why, writing Sukey Saunders's name under the heads of some of the cherubims."

"I can't say it was right, Kit—it's what mother would call heathenish," answered Doublebrain.

"Folks differ, you see," replied Scrub. "Howsoever, they said that if I was infidel—that was the word—infidel enough to write roundhand upon tombstones, I would n't stick to cry heads-and-tails among the coffins; and so upon that argument, Guss, here I am."

"That's no evidence," observed Doublebrain.

"And so I said: 'Granting the first fault,' said I—'I defy the cherubim to prove heads-and-tails;' Then the squire laughed, and then he gives me over to the beadle, who claps me here in the timber. But for all that, you see—Jack Robins," (again Kit was among the marble-players) "no funking!"

"And as you weren't in the churchyard with the tinker and the gipsy," said Augustus, "where were you, and what about?"

"Nutting," cried Christopher Snub, with a twinkling of the eye. "Nutting with Polly Spicer."

"She'll be the ruin of you," said Augustus Doublebrain, with a groan.

"Bless her!" cried Christopher, smacking his lips.

Evening approached. Augustus Doublebrain having delivered himself of his very kindest counsel, squeezed Christopher's hand, leaving him in ignominy and the best spirits. The boys, proud to receive the instruction of Snub, even though dealt from the stocks, left their marbles for supper and bed; a nightingale preluded fitfully from a neighbouring bush, and Christopher Snub sat in profoundest solitude—that is, with nothing but his innocence—in the parish stocks. Had the beadle forgotten him? Kit pondered on the malice of Scoggs, and then his thoughts wandered to the bloody-nose and the cricket-ball. The evening grew darker, and Kit became the more fixed in the belief that the beadle had determined to leave him—out of mere revenge—the whole night, beneath an autumn sky. Gusts of wind made the captive shrink—a drop of rain, prologue to a deluge, fell on Kit's cheek—and cold and hungry, Snub sat in the stocks and shivered. He tried, manfully tried, to abstract his moral self from the desolation around him; and then, as further torment, his errant soul was cheated by the apparition of the "Red Lion" raised upon his hind legs, and looking, as for twenty years he had looked, jauntily for custom, whether of man or beast. Not that the "Red Lion" maintained his time-honoured aspect, for his two forepaws, heretofore scrambling over the sign-board, now, to the imagination of the hungry wretch in the stocks, grasped a platter, wherein hissed and smoked an ample steak, and a pot of ale, with foam like purest

fleece. Was it the theory of Aristotle, that men with large hearts have great stomachs? It matters not; Christopher Snub was so organized: his bowels yearned at the vision; and then, smitten with the cheat, declined and fell, yea, almost to fainting. The lion, beef, and ale had vanished, and Christopher sat consorted with hunger and darkness.

The consciousness of innocence is a great support to the human animal; and Kit—moderately assisted by meat and malt—felt that he could have sustained his energies, even in the stocks. But to be left in cold and darkness to pine and and starve—hark!

Christopher's ears quickened. Yes! a cloud has just swum before the moon—he cannot well descry him; but, surely, that is the slow, measured step—the tread of authority announcing Scoggs. Past all doubt, thinks Kit—it's Scoggs, the beadle!

Now Kit was a little in error; it was not the beadle, but a stray jackass.

And the ass boldly approached the stocks, and stared placidly at Christopher—and Christopher, nothing daunted, stared at the ass.

CHAPTER II.

Christopher is in the stocks, and his fortune hangs upon an ass! The meek beast, with something like a touch of fellowship, gazes piteously at Snub, and the prisoner, won by the confidence, or compassion, or whatever it is staring from the brute's eyes, pats its head in token of acknowledgment. Here, thought Snub, are a couple of us; children of misery—doomed, undeservedly to bear the thumps and bitter abuse of folks who think themselves our betters! Here we are, cold, hungry—but at this moment Snub heard footsteps, and dismissing the miseries of the ass from his mind, he thought only of himself, The ass turned from the stocks, and in a minute was seized

by a couple of fellows, both of whom began drubbing the beast, and cursing and swearing at it for straying.

"Poor devil!" groaned Christopher; his heart smitten with the blows.

"What's that?" exclaimed one of the men.

"A voice from the stocks," cried the other; and advancing a few steps, the fellow stood with arms akimbo, and shaking with laughter in front of Snub. "What, is the gaol full, old fellow, that they've put you out to lodge and board on the common?" asked the man, who seemed by his dirty rags to be a travelling tinker. "Look here, Mike," he cried, and his companion approached the stocks.

Mike was evidently of the gipsy tribe. Surveying Snub, he took off his straw hat, scratched his head, then looking at the legs of Snub, exclaimed with affected pathos, "And they call this a free country!"

"You wouldn't like to get out?" asked the tinker.

"Shouldn't I?" cried Snub.

O, that folks in high places would sometimes emulate the brevity and despatch of the tinker! Without any rhetorical flourish, he put a plain question, and the answer being as plainly returned, lo! in a trice, Christopher's legs were free from the ignominious wood, and he stood stretching himself on the common. It would have been plain to an observing mind, that the dexterity of the tinker at picking a lock, was not wholly a natural gift: there was a confidence of manner, a quickness of finger, that denoted considerable education.

"And now what do you mean to do?" was the query of Snub's liberator; and never was the question put to a man less able to resolve it.

"It isn't my fault," said Snub; "but, it can't be denied, there's a hole in my character."

"If you'll come with us, we'll tinker it," was the generous offer of the gipsy. Snub was silent; perhaps he doubted the skill of the workman.

"More than that," chimed in the tinker; "we've a goose for supper."

"My character's in your hands," cried Snub. "I'm one of you."

As we do not wish to pass off Snub for an atom better than he is, we will at once declare our suspicion that it was more to his immediate want of goose than to any remote benefit to be conferred on his moral part, that Kit consented to follow his new acquaintance. Christopher had been six hours in the stocks—was cold, hungry, and—but no, we will not dwell upon the forlornness of his condition. A goose for supper! If the reader have any bowels, he must confess the greatness of the temptation. Was it in human nature in such a plight to lean upon character? Goose for supper! Odours from Araby! The seraphic moralist may shut his eyes and pinch his nostrils: Christopher Snub was but mortal man.

"You'll go with us—eh?" said the tinker. "Well then, as we must make haste, and your legs ar'n't any better for the wooden stockings, you'd better jump on Rose-in-June, and take this stake."

Immediately Christopher mounted the ass with the fragrant name; and much we fear that, from the manner in which our hero belaboured Rose-in-June, he had altogether forgotten the benevolence that warmed his bosom towards the ass when seated in the stocks. To be sure, there was then no goose for supper.

The ass, obedient to the cudgel, trotted, as he would redeem the character of his tribe from sluggishness; the tinker and the gipsy ran, and in half-an-hour the party halted at a pastoral tent in a green lane. The fire, blazing in front of the tent, warmed the heart's core of Kit; and, whether it was the odour of wild flowers, or the gravy of goose that delicately smote his nostrils, he could not satisfactorily determine: certain it is, his hope inclined to the latter. The tinker and gipsy advanced to the fire, and Christopher dismounting, stood

modestly apart. Staring and snuffing in the distance, Kit saw a woman seated by the fire, cooking as he hoped the promised supper: again and again he snuffed; and then his heart felt like a piece of dead flesh, for he heard the gipsy cry, with all the passion worthy of the disappointment, "Damnation! the goose not come!"

"Where the devil is he?" cried the tinker. He had scarcely spoken, when a man bounced through the hedge; and, after a moment's hesitation on the part of tinker and gipsy, who, grasping their cudgels, took an attitude not expressive of benevolence, the stranger was welcomed with the greatest possible fervour. Kit had cautiously withdrawn himself still farther from his new companions, who, overjoyed by the presence of the last comer, seemed to have forgotten the hospitality due to the late resident in the stocks. He stood, or rather lay apart on the grass, watching with anxious heart and yearning bowels the motions of his friends, who laughed, and, as he thought, joked; and then, squatting themselves about the fire, commenced an operation dear to the household recollections of Kit: the goose was come, and it was plain that some of the blessings of civilization had descended upon the gipsies, for they did not eat their poultry in the feathers.

"How many on 'em did you nab?" inquired the tinker.

"Seven," answered the stranger; "and had a near chance of the old gander."

"You're a reg'lar good un," cried the gipsy: "but we feared you'd ha' forgotten the priggery."

"'Tis n't in my nature," said the stranger. "To be sure, I had a good run for it from the churchyard, and I did n't think myself safe till I heard they'd got hold of Kit."

"Who 's Kit?" asked the gipsy.

"Why, Kit 's a nincompoop," answered the finder of the supper.

Christopher no sooner heard this opinion passed upon if not himself, at least upon a namesake, than he raised himself upon his legs, and silently as a rabbit moved towards the tent.

"Nothing but a nincompoop; at school he used to take my floggings, and now—ha! ha!—I shouldn't wonder if he was to be hanged in mistake for me some of these days."

There was something so irresistibly droll in the picture—in the mere idea of throttling an innocent man, and purely in mistake for the true offender, that the whole party roared with laughter.

"You see, when we were started from the churchyard, I took to my heels and ran home to my master. Well, you can't think the relief it was to me to hear that they 'd taken up Kit Snub: and how do you think it came about? Why, they found his hat, with his name in it, in the churchyard. Now—ha! ha! I shall kill myself with laughing—ha! ha! ha! who do you think left his hat there?"

"Augustus Doublebrain!" shouted Christopher Snub, and Augustus dropping the stolen poultry, gazed aghast at his long-suffering companion. Kit was a peaceable, good-tempered creature; but the thoughts of his unmerited ignominy in the stocks rushing upon him, he suddenly found his fingers at the throat of Augustus Doublebrain; whilst the body of that very adroit person twisted and writhed like an eel, and his face became almost as black as his heart.

"You wouldn't murder the young man!" exclaimed the gipsy.

"Are you a christian?" asked the tinker.

Kit released his wronger; who, gasping like a landed fish, in a moment caught Christopher in his arms, and we believe —for it was too dark for Kit to see them—with tears rolling down his cheeks, vowed that he was determined to die in that posture, unless Snub immediately forgave him. "I did every thing for the best," cried the weeping Doublebrain.

"Put me in the stocks," said Christopher, sullenly.

"All for the best," repeated Doublebrain, grounded for words, though not for tears.

"Blasted my character!" exclaimed Snub, with rising wrath.

"What's character?" asked the tinker.

"Is it good *sarce* for ducks?" inquired the gipsy, "if so, hand us over some. What's the use of blubbering like a baby?" said the Bohemian to the still streaming Doublebrain. "Squat, I say, squat."

"And pick the ducks like a man," added the female; for the first time, strange to say, joining in the argument.

Though Doublebrain was smitten to the soul by the reproaches of Snub, he nevertheless felt that, in common with all men, he had social duties to perform; and therefore, though choking with private sorrow, he repressed his tears, and sat him down to pick the ducks.

"You'll lick your chops at 'em I dare say," said the tinker to Snub, "so here, just strip this fellow to the buff," and with the word, the speaker threw a dead drake to Christopher.

"I wouldn't touch one of 'em for the world," cried Christopher.

"Why, we know we promised you a goose; but as things has turned up, it isn't to be done. What of that? Is anything certain in this world? Why should you be so nice? When we can't get a goose, let's thank our stars, and without complaint do as well as we can with two ducks!" Such was the meek philosophy of the tinker; a philosophy we have seen exemplified by very respectable people, who thereupon very properly took to themselves the praise of much self-restraint.

The ducks were picked with great despatch, though Christopher lent no hand to the work. Silent and apart he leaned against a tree, and though resolved to touch no morsel of the stolen goods, he was still held by some unaccountable fascination to the spot, watching the roasting poultry, and—martyr to his bowels—smelling its reeking odour. The tinker and gipsy laughed, and the woman bustled about the fire; poor Augustus Doublebrain, with his eye upon the ducks and his hand upon his heart, groaning occasionally. He felt a growing appetite, and mourned a departed friend.

In a brief time, supper was served. Christopher drew closer

to the fire, and seated himself upon the grass: nevertheless, he was still determined to taste no piece of the ducks, though much pressed thereto by the tinker, the gipsy, and the woman.

"It will do you no good," said Christopher, as the feeders tore and gnawed the stolen property; "depend upon it, 't will do you no good."

How often is this belief the barren satisfaction of hungry virtue! How often does famishing innocence, watching the wicked feeders of the world—the gorbellied varlets, with mouths greasy with the goods of cheated worth—find comfort in the belief that "it will do them no good!" Lean virtue shakes the head, and cries, "It will do you no good," and rapine still keeps greasy in the face, still grows "a finger on the ribs."

Christopher continued to exclaim to the unthinking Augustus, "It will do you no good;" though we will not deny that at every repetition of the warning, the moralist shuffled closer to the fire, and despite of himself, smacked his lips with louder smack. For the tenth time Snub, with his hand within an inch of a fat duck, cried, "It will do you no good," when a shout was set up—a scuffle ensued—his feasted companions took to their heels—and the virtuous Christopher, with belly empty as a poor-box, sat and shivered on the grass in custody of the beadle and the constable.

The robbery had been found out; the flight of Snub discovered; and escaped culprit, and stolen ducks traced by the vigilant functionaries of Hempenfield to the green lane. Christopher Snub was "born to be hanged."

CHAPTER III.

It was particularly fortunate for Christopher that the assizes were near at hand: we say fortunate, for he was spared a dull, heavy season of doubt; and, as he was charged with an atrocious offence, with a crime rendered more iniquitous by the late frequency of its commission, Snub was in that post of

danger occupied at times by a culprit who is to be manufactured into an example! To steal a certain number of ducks is, it must be allowed, a wrong done to society; but to commit the theft, after many other like robberies by other folks, is, it would seem, a still greater wrong: hence, when six pickers and stealers of ducks are merely transported, the seventh robber of the like domestic fowl shall be hanged. If it be asked—Wherefore? The philosophy of the law answers,—Because the thief came late into the field: had he been only the sixth robber he had been a transported felon; being the seventh, he must be a throttled example. Now Christopher Snub was at least the seventh. It was clear that he was born to be hanged—that is, born for an example!

Still Christopher had a chance of escape. The great point of danger to be considered by himself and friends was, not the wickedness of the culprit, but the judge who was to try him. If Justice Butter, a short imprisonment and whipping might be the worst; if, on the other hand, Mr. Baron Sus-per-coll, then was Christopher Snub no better than an example; that is, a dead thief.

Luckless Christopher! To be sure thou wilt but fulfil thy destiny; thou wert born to be hanged, and thy execution is as good as ordered; for already, hear the trumpets! Hark! how they bray forth the dread approach of Baron Sus-per-coll!

The Baron, unlike many men of worldly fame, deserved his reputation. To hang was with him, not so much a duty as a passion. Early in life he had been possessed with the solemn impulse: when at school, all his pocket-money was expended to purchase dogs and cats, to be treated according to his early principles of justice; in familiar phrase, hanged. His tree of social liberty was the tree that grew at Tyburn; the Gordian knot of policy, a nice new hempen halter. The black cap was the cap he would have always worn: he never felt so easy, warm, and truly comfortable as when it graced his head. He could have gone to bed in it! Strange it was that the cap,

like the hidden spring in some garden statues, no sooner touched the Baron than it drew water down his cheeks: though seemingly only a piece of stone before, Baron Sus-per-coll played from the bench on the prisoner in the dock a very fountain of sympathy. He never hanged but he cried; and, as he never lost an opportunity of hanging, we may conclude, that, like ladies in hysterics, crying did him a world of good. The end of poor Baron Sus-per-coll—for he died (for a judge) at the untimely age of eighty-four, and really in the full possession of all the faculties left him, was hastened by his aqueous feelings. He had passed sentence on a miscreant, a famishing weaver, who had stolen a dish of giblets from a poulterer's, and the Baron had wept exceedingly. Unfortunately, he had come on the circuit with a new servant, and the domestic had failed to dry his lordship's ermine for the next day's business. The robe was, as usual, drenched with tears; it was the winter circuit, and the damp struck to the Baron's chest. It was plain that he was about to depart for a world, which he had done all in his judicial power to render populous. Still, he rallied nobly; but happening in the same circuit to have a maiden assize, the unexpected blow concluded the work. With a sickly, mortal smile, Baron Sus-per-coll received the white gloves, and immediately took to his bed. For an hour or two before his death his senses wandered; for he insisted upon having the black cap brought to his bedside, then put it upon his head, sat bolt upright, and commenced, in the most pathetic terms, passing sentence upon himself! He first began by condemning himself as an old and hardened offender; congratulated himself that he had been tried by an inflexible and enlightened jury; congratulated the country that he himself would be hanged, for he was a pest, a blot, an ulcer to society; and then conjured himself to make the most of the time that remained to him; forbidding himself to hope for the least mercy in this world, but to trust only to the mercy of the next. He then, wiping his eyes very often with the sheet, said that

nothing more remained to himself but to pass sentence upon himself: that the sentence was, that he should be taken to whence he came, and hanged by the neck until he was dead. "And Mr. Baron Sus-per-coll," these were the Baron's last delirious words, "may the Lord have mercy on your soul!" Saying this, the judge laid himself upon his pillow, and, the black cap still upon his head, died! To our story.

The stolen ducks, or rather the heads of some of them, had been found in the possession of Christopher Snub; the owners of the birds could swear to the property; Baron Sus-per-coll was to try the prisoner; and the prophecy of the good folks of Hempenfield was about to be fulfilled—"Christopher Snub was born to be hanged." Another circumstance added mightily to the prejudice against the prisoner. That pious, civil, well-meaning young man, Augustus Doublebrain, had run away from the town; no doubt inveigled to the imprudence by the bad example and wicked counsel of Kit Snub.

The trial of the prisoner approached. Kit was placed at the bar, and confident of his innocence looked, in the opinion of his Hempenfield neighbours, a brazen, guilty varlet. He ought to have been bent, weighed down, crushed by a sense of his iniquity, and he stood upright as a wand, and gazed about him very tranquilly. The case was opened, and very early in the trial, Mr. Baron Sus-per-coll felt a certain moisture at the eyes indicative of the coming torrent. The waters were rising—it was clear that Kit Snub was born to be hanged. The owner of the ducks was examined, to quote the report in the county paper, at "considerable length." The bodies of the ducks had been consumed; their fragmentary bones were found strewn on the greensward, but two heads were found entire. The witness had not the slightest doubt that such heads were the property of his late ducks; he would no more hesitate at swearing to his ducks than to his children. An outhouse had been forcibly entered, and four of the ducks carried off; the heads produced in court belonged to two of

them—one to the drake, *that* he would swear. It was impossible for him to be mistaken; he had reared the ducks from the shell; had fed them every day, and would pick them out from a thousand; witness was fully aware of the solemnity of an oath, and was perfectly ready to swear to *all that.*

Mr. Baron Sus-per-coll, among other antipathies, could not endure a pragmatic witness. As the owner of the ducks proceeded in his testimony, the judge felt more than ordinarily annoyed and twitted by the impudent confidence of the vulgar fellow; hence, by a sudden reversion of feeling, the Baron's sympathies were quickened for the prisoner at the bar. The witness continued to speak with indecorous glibness, Baron Sus-per-coll exclaiming to himself, and sufficiently loud to be heard all over the court,—"pooh, pooh!" "pshaw!" "tut, tut!" "foolish fellow!" "how *can* he swear it?"

"And you take your oath that this is the head of your drake?" asked the counsel, for the tenth and last time.

"I do," answered the witness; "I could swear it until to-morrow morning."

"Pooh, pooh, pooh!" cried the Baron loudly, as was his wont, to himself; "one drake's head is like another drake's head, as one duck's egg is like another duck's egg."

The counsel for the prosecution had finished the task, when the prisoner's counsel, who sat immediately under the bench, and had heard every syllable uttered by the judge, jumped to his feet with great alacrity. "Stay, my good man," said the counsel, "let me put to you this simple question. Remember, you are upon your oath; and on your oath answer me—if one drake's head isn't like another drake's head, as one duck's egg is like another duck's egg?"

The pen fell from the hand of Baron Sus-per-coll; his face assumed the most solemn aspect; and, the silent witness scratching his head the while, the Baron slowly rose from his seat, and leaning over his desk, said to the prisoner's counsel, "Mr. Mantrap, I see the finger of Heaven in this trial: the

question you have so admirably, so pithily put to the witness, was at the very moment passing through my brain." Still the witness scratched his head: when the judge turning from him with something like a contemptuous glance, said to the jury, "Gentlemen, the prisoner must be discharged: there is no case." The late prisoner readily taking the judge at his word, was for running out of the dock, when he was solemnly addressed by Mr. Baron Sus-per-coll. "Christopher Snub, you have had a most fortunate escape: whether or not you stole this good man's ducks, is the inscrutable secret of your own breast. However this may be, you owe the deepest debt of obligation to the wisdom, the forethought, the admirable sagacity of your counsel. It might have gone far otherwise with you: and when I consider the frequency of these attacks upon the sanctity of private property—when I feel the imperative call of society for some example, it becomes my painful duty"—and at these words Baron Sus-per-coll, by the mere force of custom, began to weep—"to implore you to make the most of the time alloted to you; to intreat you to lay aside all earthly hope, and to trust only for—eh?—oh!—ha! bless me, I'd forgot"—and the Baron hastily dried his streaming eyes, remembering that Christopher was not to be executed, but discharged. In an instant, all the native terrors of the judge returned, and, in a voice of thunder, Baron Sus-per-coll exclaimed to Snub, "Fellow, you have had a narrow escape; don't come here again!"

The people of Hempenfield were astonished at the non-fulfilment of the old prediction. Until at soonest the next assizes, Christopher Snub, though born for the destiny, could not be hanged!

Christopher Snub was discharged with the bloom of the county gaol upon his name. In the eye of the law he was innocence itself: vain solace against the significant winkings of his early neighbours! What was he to do?—whither, in his tribulation, was he to guide his steps? A thousand times

did he curse the chance that flung him into the company of that false friend, Doublebrain! When Christopher quitted prison, his worldly wealth was ten shillings. For a whole day, he walked the fields and lanes, skulking like a poacher. Twenty times he sat himself under a hedge; twenty times pulling his fortune from his pocket, displaying the coin in his hand, and staring at it as if he hoped to obtain counsel from the silver pieces. He had read of London Lord Mayors—of golden merchants—who, some with not more than a crown in their pockets, and some with not a farthing, had walked to London, treading its flinty streets with unsoled shoes: other men had had smaller beginnings than himself; why should he despair? His bundle held three shirts and two pair of stockings; his coat was sound, his shoes whole, his hat all but new. A pin for the bad odour of a gaol! that would never be found out in London: he was determined; he would sneak towards Hempenfield; take a farewell of lovely Polly Spicer, and gird up his loins for a pilgrimage to town. Such was the manful determination of Christopher. For the last time he took out his ten shillings, and counting them as they lay in his hand, was deeply meditating on the least possible sum to be expended on the road. He was at least a hundred and fifty miles from London: and he pondered on the separate claims of two or three shillings as sufficient for travelling expenses. He sat, with the money in his hand, absorbed by the perplexing question. How often vain is all human speculation: for at the very moment that Christopher decided to pinch his bowels by allowing to them only two shillings, resolving to enter London with the unbroken eight,—at that very instant, a fellow presented a pistol at the head of Christopher, with the highway laconism of "money or your life!"

Christopher was no coward; still there is something in a cocked pistol, held about three inches from the *os frontis*, that is apt to confound the stoutest heart. Snub, thunderstruck by the demand, cried in a doubtful voice, "You wouldn't rob *me?*"

"Money or your life," was briefly repeated by the thief, who shewed no emotion, if he felt it, at the appeal, for his face was adorned with a black mask.

"I'm just out of gaol myself," said Christopher, thinking that as nominally one of the thief's fraternity, he ought to tread the highway scot free.

"It's a lie," said the highwayman; indirectly complimenting Christopher's honesty at the expense of his truth.

"Upon my soul I am," cried Snub; "I've been tried for robbery, and got off," for Snub thought it might considerably damage him with the highwayman if he protested his innocence. "It was all over with me as I thought, but luck turned up, and I escaped through a flaw."

"And what did you steal?" asked the highwayman.

"Four ducks," answered Christopher, very meekly.

"Why, you paltry, contemptible scoundrel," cried the footpad, in great indignation; "it's such sneaking vagabonds as you that bring disgrace upon robbery! Four ducks!"

"We—we broke open an outhouse, and they were all we could find," cried Snub in extenuation.

"Money or your life," growled the highwayman; and having looked at the pistol flint, he presented the weapon an inch nearer the brain of the duck-stealer. Still Snub hesitated; an instant, and he would have made a dash at the highwayman, when glancing aside, he saw in the distance two men, companions of the thief, serenely watching the professional powers of their friend. "Another minute," said the impatient highwayman, "and I'll leave you for the crows;" some of those unclean birds being at the moment very audible. With a deep groan, and his eyes riveted on the pistol, Christopher surrendered his ten shillings; he must now enter London—if ever he got there—without a farthing!

"I'm going to town," cried Snub, in a vain endeavour to move the thief's compassion; "at least give me something back. How am I to live?"

"There's plenty of ducks on the road," said the hard-hearted highwayman. "And now, my friend, I'll trouble you for your coat and waistcoat."

"You'll never strip me!" exclaimed Christopher.

"Wouldn't be so cruel," answered the thief, who taking off his coat and waistcoat, indicated by the act that he only proposed to make a benevolent exchange. The highwayman's friends stood apart, laughing hugely at the drollery of their companion. Snub felt it was in vain to resist, hence he threw his garments on the ground, which were more speedily picked up and put on by the despoiler. "A very nice beaver, indeed, and our heads both of a size!" said the thief, taking the hat of Christopher, and crowning him in exchange, with a mis-shapen piece of greasy felt.

"And will you leave me in this state? will you leave me nothing?" asked Snub in despair.

"No, my friend," answered the highwayman, with a pleasant familiarity; "I leave you my hat, my coat, my waistcoat, and with 'em this little bit of advice. You see there was a small rumpus at a house in this neighbourhood last night; we call it an affair of plate-chest, the law would call it burglary. Now, my excellent friend, if by any chance, you should be invited to take dinner at Mr. Doublechin's, Manna Lodge, listen to my advice, and don't go in that coat." So spake the highwayman, and in two minutes, Christopher Snub penniless, and with nothing but the cast skin of a burglar to creep into —with naught but a coat, with felony and conviction in the very web of it—stood shivering beneath the winds of heaven. What could he do? Should he return to the first house and give an alarm, denouncing the robbers? Who would believe him—him whose name was tainted with four stolen ducks? Again, if he lingered in the neighbourhood, he might be apprehended as an accessary after the fact; he had but one resource; it was not twenty miles to the coast, and giving up his cherished hope of seeing Polly Spicer—of renewing his

vows of fidelity for ever and ever—he turned from the road, and with heart heavy as an usurer's conscience, trudged his way towards the "melancholy main." We will not follow Christopher through every petty incident; but shall at once inform the reader that, after much supplication, Snub induced the captain of a trader to take him aboard his vessel; though, in the ingenuous language of the commander, Kit was not for some time to consider himself a bit better than as much live lumber.

CHAPTER IV.

For five years was Christopher Snub tossed upon the sea. Being expressly born to be hanged, the dangers of the ocean were, however, no dangers to him. He had been insured by fate against a drowning death: like a cork, he might be restlessly thrown about upon the waters; and like a cork, would never go to the bottom. For five years was Snub a sailor, and next behold him a slave: a Christian slave, toiling under the tyranny of a Moorish master. Christopher's ship was taken by a set of heathenish bucaniers, and its gallant crew parceled out and sold in separate lots in the slave-market. As Snub stood to be bought, as he felt himself nothing more than a bale of merchandise, to be bargained and huckstered for, the tears started to his eyes, and he lapsed into a day-dream. Again he saw his native common, again he heard his contemporary geese; again he beheld the stocks! Scoggs the beadle, moved majestically before him; Polly Spicer tripped like a wood-nymph by; Augustus Doublebrain,—but as Christopher pondered on the fox-like features of his early friend, the good man who owned Snub, and was anxious to turn him into money, visited his naked shoulders with a lash that instantaneously brought his reflections back to a Barbary slave-market. "What do you think of him?" said the human flesh-

dealer, "if you want an active, strong slave, a fellow for hard work, you can't do better; not too much flesh, you see, and not too thin." This recommendation of Christopher was addressed to an old Moor of venerable aspect, who eyed the article with some distrust. "An Englishman, eh? humph! I have already a slave of that nation: a lazy, sneaking cur, that I'd sell again for half the money he cost me. How much do you ask for this dog of a Christian?" Snub's owner taking the Moor by the sleeve, stepped aside, and the bargaining began. It was plain to Christopher, that the seller extolled his many virtues to the skies, whilst the buyer with equal energy, denied both their number and excellence. After much higgling, the slave-dealer struck the bargain, and passing over Snub to the Moor, said "Go; follow your master."

"Woe is me!" cried Snub in the bitterness of his anguish, "better had it been to have staid at home, and been hanged on a Christian gallows, than to live to be sold to a wicked stony-hearted old Turk; to wear out my days under the lash and the bastinado." In justice to the Moor, we must observe that he was much wronged by the hard thoughts of his new bondsman. Muley Hassan Ali Bibbubbob was a gentle master; he set too high a value on his slaves to damage them very much by excessive punishment: the bastinado was certainly not unknown on his estate, and now and then he would feel it necessary, but all for the benefit of an example, to bow-string an offender; this, however, happened but rarely: a month at least had elapsed since the last execution, when Christopher became the lawful property of Muley Hassan Ali Bibbubbob.

Snub had no sooner arrived at his master's dwelling, than he was set to work, digging, fetching, and carrying on the grounds; with sunset his labour ceased, and he was ordered to go to rest, to betake himself to the hovel where the other Christian dog was kenneled. Snub approached the hut; but ere he reached the threshold, the slave, his brother in misery, uttering a loud cry, ran to meet him, embracing him with the

greatest passion. "This is a happiness—this is a delight!—O Christopher! what great good-luck brought you here?"

Snub started at the voice, and releasing himself from the arms of his new companion, at length discovered in the gaunt frame, and worn and harassed features of the slave, his early, his fatal friend, Augustus Doublebrain. To him did Christopher owe disgrace, imprisonment, exile, and slavery; yet could he not repress his tears, and again and again he embraced him like a brother. "Lord! Augustus! what brought you here?" exclaimed Christopher; and Augustus briefly told his melancholy history; so briefly, that he left out many things which, in the judgment of a biographer, might have given a very bold marking to the narrative; he could not, however, sufficiently condemn the villany, the meanness, the ingratitude of the gipsy and the tinker: for they, fearing that he might on some occasions tell ugly truths of them for the service of morality, lured him to the sea-side; when there, threw him into the hands of a crimp, and he was borne far from the country of his fathers, in a filthy, wretched ship destined to become the prey of a crew of pirates. In a word, he was sold to his present master, whom he had served for two years.

"And we shall live and die here," cried Christopher in despair.

"I don't think I shall, Kit," said Doublebrain; "for my uncle has grown rich, and I have sent to him that he may learn my sad condition, and to beg him to pay my ransom."

"If he should send money enough for both!" exclaimed the hopeful Snub.

"I don't think that likely," answered the comfortless Augustus; then, hastily waving the subject, he begged to know the adventures of his friend. Christopher told his story, omitting no syllable. He particularly dwelt on the inhumanity of the highwayman who stripped him; a circumstance he might as well have passed in silence; inasmuch as

that Doublebrain had had a very favourable view of the whole scene; a truth, however, that even in slavery he did not care to make known to Christopher.

"You have had your troubles, indeed, Kit," said Augustus, conveniently forgetting their origin; "still, after all these trials, it's something to meet with an old friend. I can't pretend to say how *you* feel; but for my part, I'm delighted to see you."

"What's past is gone," said Snub after a struggle. "So, once again, Augustus, there's my hand. And now what sort of a master is this Turk of ours?"

"An ogre, worse than an ogre, Kit; he has bagged three wives since I've been with him."

"Bagged 'em!" cried Kit.

"He thought they winked under their veils at the slaves; and pop they went into a sack, and souse into the sea. That's their law of divorce in Barbary, and every husband's his own judge."

"Are the women very beautiful?" asked Christopher.

Doublebrain shivered at the question. "I hav'n't looked, Kit; I wouldn't open my eyes to 'em, not if they'd go down upon their knees and ask me. I hear they're beautiful as angels, and I'm content to take folks' word for the matter."

Days, and weeks, and months pass on, and Christopher has worn out a year of bondage. His gaiety of spirit supports him under his chains, but Doublebrain becomes every day more touchy and querulous. Hearing nothing from his uncle, he concludes that he must die a slave; and seeks satisfaction in his abuse of Christopher for his cheerfulness. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself," he would say; "you can't have a Briton's love for his country, or you wouldn't be so happy with heathens."

For a month past, Christopher had worked in the part of the gardens adjoining the apartments of the old Moor's twenty wives. Often his heart would beat with recollections of Polly

Spicer, as some veiled fair one would pass by: oft was he about to raise his eyes, when he thought of his head, and ventured not a look. Day after day he had this contest with his curiosity, and night came and he was still triumphant. One evening, however, when about to cease labour, he heard the softest, most delicious voice breathing a Moorish melody; it was plain, the singer was in a bower not fifty paces from Christopher; he was determined; he would look upon the face of the warbler; and walking on tiptoe towards the spot, he raised his eyes, and beheld not only one of the Moor's wives, but the awful old husband himself squatted at his pipe. The woman screamed; Muley jumped to his feet, and Christopher Snub took to his legs. The insulted wife saw that the offender was one of the two Christians, but which she knew not. Muley Hassan promised her the culprit's head with all the readiness of a doting husband.

The Christian slaves, to the peculiar horror of Augustus, were straightway summoned before their master. Kit soundly protested that he was innocent of the charge laid to him, and Doublebrain, weeping a river, offered to take his oath upon any book in the world that he was guiltless as a lamb. The Turk, sand-blind heathen as he was, had some glimpse of justice. His first thought was to strike off the head of both his slaves without further notice: he next decided to give them three days' grace. If in that time the one culprit confessed his fault, he alone should suffer the death of a dog, for he should be hanged; if he remained stubborn, both should perish. The conversation that ensued and was protracted throughout the night between the two friends, was peculiarly animated.

"You're a fine fellow; always were a fine fellow, and can't be nothing but a fine fellow; and so, my dear Kit, I know you'll tell the truth, and save your friend."

"It will be a comfort for us to die together," said Christopher.

"But it's mean, it's infamous; it's the worst of wickedness

to make another man suffer for our own fault," cried Doublebrain.

"Quack, quack, quack," answered Snub; but Doublebrain had evidently forgotten all about the four ducks.

"But my dear Kit, you wouldn't sacrifice the head of a friend?"

"Heads or tails," observed Christopher, with a lively recollection of the churchyard and the stocks.

All the arguments of Doublebrain were useless, and terrified by the stubbornness of his friend, Augustus became suddenly ill. The Moor, resolved not to be balked of his justice, sent the doctor to the Christian slave; and that learned man, having drenched and bled the patient even beyond all medical example, pronounced him to be dying. The doctor quitted Doublebrain, assuring him that it was impossible he could live out the day.

"I'm dying," said Augustus to Christopher; and for once the truth seemed in his face. "I'm dying; and, as there has been something wrong between us, you won't at this time, bear malice?"

"Not I," cried Kit, "I forgive everything; only promise to do me a last favour. As you must die, my dear friend, do take this little fault upon yourself."

"What—the—the Moor's wife?" cried Augustus.

"I sat in the stocks for your pitch-and-toss—I bore the weight of your stolen ducks," observed Christopher.

"Perhaps I may recover," said Doublebrain.

"Impossible," said Snub.

"But if I should get better?" cried Augustus.

"You're a dead man," asseverated Christopher.

The patient became worse and worse, and believing himself at the last gasp, he confessed that he was the culprit; that he had dared to look upon the Moor's wife.

It was very strange, but Augustus had no sooner made such confession, than he immediately became better. His recovery was even more sudden than his sickness; and in three days

he was restored for—the hangman. In vain did Augustus vow that he had lied to serve his friend; in vain did he call upon Christopher to own his guilt like a man; Christopher shook his head; and the Moor holding to his purpose, Augustus Doublebrain was—hanged.

Unhappy Doublebrain! for only three days after his death, his ransom sent by his uncle, was proffered to the Moor, who saying nothing of the mishap that had befallen the dead man, delivered up in his place the living Christopher.

Snub returned home, married Polly Spicer; became a thriving tradesman, and—a stone in Hempenfield churchyard records the fact—died in his bed at the age of sixty-and-three.

Let no man prophesy that any scapegrace is "born to be hanged."

THE METAPHYSICIAN AND THE MAID.

Lorenzo Silvertop had arrived at the thoughtful age of forty-eight, only the day before he became the lodger of Adam Buttons, breeches-maker, and liveryman of the worshipful company of Master Tailors. Lorenzo was a bachelor; more, he was a metaphysician. He could take mind to pieces as easily as a watchmaker could take a chronometer to bits—knew every little spring of human action; and, in a word, looked through the heads of the sons and daughters of Eve, as easily as though they were of glass, and the motives therein working, labouring bees. To have gained this wisdom is, indeed, to have achieved the noblest triumph of human wit—to look down upon the world, the unmoved spectator of its great, as of its little ways, is to sit upon the highest pinnacle attainable by man; only a little higher stand the angels.

Adam Buttons, never having heard of metaphysics, was, unhappily, ignorant of the proper importance of his new lodger: not that Adam was wholly insensible of his worth—certainly not; for his value to Adam was that of fourteen shillings a week, in payment for the accommodation of two small rooms, domestic service included.

The house of Adam Buttons was, in truth, given up—that is, let out in many divisions. In the first floor was a flourishing young lawyer, sleek with a fine practice; his office being in Lothbury. Above him was the cashier in a banker's of Lombard-street; in the front attic, lived one of calling unknown—in the back garret, a person who had once been a

gentleman. In a dark parlour, with a darker ante-room, filled with a bed, dwelt Lorenzo Silvertop, metaphysician. Where Adam Buttons, his wife, and daughter, consumed the four-and-twenty hours, was never ostentatiously made known; however, there ran a dark suspicion that they inhabited the kitchens. From this, it will be gathered that Buttons was one of those unconscious worldly philosophers, who are content to make the most of their possessions—taking no heed of extrinsic appearance, so that their pockets hold an inward good. Mrs. Buttons was flesh of Adam's flesh, and bone of Adam's bone: but for Bridget Buttons,—as she was in Bow-church books registered the daughter of Adam and Wilhelmina Buttons, we must believe in her parentage, otherwise—to avoid all circumlocution, to come at once to a plain statement of the case,—Bridget Buttons was an angel! We repeat it; an angel!—and there were five lodgers in the house, and all of them, on their own shewing, in the comfortless state of celibacy.—An angel in the furnace.

At the time Lorenzo Silvertop took Buttons' parlours for his abiding-place, he was immersed, chin deep, in a new quarto volume on "Free Will." For the past three years he had sunk, and sunk, in that *mare profundum*, when at length he began to think that he had touched ground.

He alone, who has for months, nay years, lived upon great imaginings—whose subject hath been a part of his blood—a throb of his pulse—hath scarcely faded from his brain as he hath fallen to sleep—hath waked with him—hath, in his squalid study, glorified even poverty—hath walked with him abroad, and by its ennobling presence, raised him above the prejudice, the little spite, the studied negligence, the sturdy wrong, that, in his out-door life sneer upon and elbow him,—he alone, say we, can understand the calm, deep, yea severe joy, felt by Lorenzo, as he stood tiptoe on page 250, and heard afar the silver trump of fame—and with his fingers felt, amid his thin, his gray-flecked hair, the budding bays.

In another month, and Lorenzo would change his old familiar for a more profitable demon. He would no longer creep along the streets, accompanied by Desert, a pretty fellow, yet withal, a timid, blushing, stammering knave, content to slink with him he waits upon, down dismal alleys, over barren heaths, at length, it may be, conducting his master to a dry ditch for his bed, and to wild cresses and water for his breakfast—a trick the varlet hath often put upon brave spirits—but, in his place, that swaggering, brow-beating, gold-laced lackey, Success, would clear the way for Silvertop, would strike off the hats of the mob, content to be so unbonneted, seeing that Success—oh! the magic of his name upon the world, hath willed it—nor ever ask whence comes he, what's his value? No matter for his birthplace, his parentage; Success has all-in-all in his name. Though he were born on the wayside, his mother a gipsy, and his father a clipper of coin—for his name, and name alone, men shall bow down and worship him. Desert weeps at the early grave of the broken-hearted, Success eats ortolans with a quacksalver at threescore. Men may certainly be brought to allow the possible existence of unrewarded Desert, but for Success, there can be no doubt of its vitality; he is seen, known, touched; nay, sometimes men dine with him.

Silvertop was far gone in "Free Will," and, on rising, had girded himself up for new endeavour, when Bridget Buttons entered with his breakfast. She smiled, curtseyed, bade the new lodger good-morning, and having filled the teapot, left the metaphysician to explain to himself the cause of a sudden agitation of the divine faculty, at the time perplexing Lorenzo Silvertop. Strange, that he who could so ably unriddle the moral enigmas of other men, could by no means discover the clue of his own perplexity. He pondered, and pondering, raised the teapot—poured and poured—and at length leaped, with something like an oath, from his chair, the scalding fluid having overflowed the cup, and run in a burning torrent down the table-cloth, upon the metaphysician's breeches.

"Did you call, Sir?" asked Bridget, at the time passing the door, and hearing Silvertop, who with extraordinary presence of mind dropped his Bandana handkerchief before his soaking garment, at the same time, despite of blistering flesh, smiling very blandly: word he spoke not.

"Dear me!" said Bridget, observing the mischief; and then with a cheerful voice, and treading the carpet like a fawn, she added, "but I'll change it, Sir, directly."

Scarcely five minutes elapsed, and another snowy cloth decorated the table — the teapot was replenished, and saving the little personal discomfort felt by Silvertop, he had as goodly promise of breakfast as before. Again, however, the metaphysician fell into a study — again he felt strangely bewildered, and was again sturdily seeking the cause of his annoyance: thus, for ten minutes with his two hands clasping his right knee, and raising the leg two feet from the ground, he leant back in his chair, and tried to analyze his own emotions: whether he had arrived at any satisfactory conclusion we know not; but to this fact we can vouch: he had unconsciously wheeled himself from the table, his right leg dangling over a plate of toast at the fender; suddenly the limb descended, and on the instant the plate was split in twain, and the buttered toast lay scattered beneath the ashes.

"Did you call, Sir?" again asked Bridget, instantly looking in; but ere Silvertop could make reply, Bridget saw the ruin, and observed, "O, that wicked cat!"

"Cat!" exclaimed Silvertop.

"He's always in mischief—but I'll make some more, Sir, in a minute," said Bridget, and with a beaming face she tripped from the room.

"Cat!" said the metaphysician to himself. "Ha! that proves she has great delicacy of mind—considerable delicacy." Again he lapsed into thoughtfulness, then after a few minutes rose, and striding up and down, exclaimed in the highest notes of self-satisfaction—"There was no cat!"

A fresh supply of toast was brought by Bridget; she approached the fireplace, placed the toast upon the fender, stirred the fire. This done, she was about to turn away, when she found her hand grasped by the new lodger.

"Bridget," said the metaphysician.

"Sir," said Bridget.

"There was no cat," cried Silvertop, at once satisfying his love of truth—and to him truth was an idol—and shewing to Bridget Buttons his full appreciation of her motives. "There was no cat," said the metaphysician; and what think ye, reader, answered Bridget?

Bridget brushed down the corner of her apron, took it up, and replied, "La! Sir."

"She has great delicacy," again thought Silvertop, as the maiden quitted the apartment; "great delicacy, and, yes, considerable intelligence." Now, thinks the reader, the metaphysician is in a fair way for breakfast; at length, he will pause in his study of human motives, make his meal, and then return to his tome on "Free Will." Let the reader learn that Lorenzo Silvertop added no leaf of laurel to his crown that day, and for the breakfast he made, will the reader listen to the dialogue of Dame Buttons and her daughter, standing at the hearth of the lodger, five minutes after he had quitted the house.

"He seems a strange customer," said Mrs. Buttons, looking suspiciously about the room.

"A very odd gentleman," remarked Bridget. "La! look here."

"Lord bless us!" cried Mrs. Buttons; "and I'm blessed! —look there too." Be it known, that Bridget pointed to the sugar-basin, into which the philosopher had emptied the contents of the teapot, and that in the dry saucepan on the fire, were two eggs baking, the water having boiled away.

"He has made no breakfast," said Bridget.

"And spoilt the saucepan," said the thrifty Mrs. Buttons.

"Do you know, mother, I think he's a scholar," was the speculation of the daughter.

"God forbid!" ejaculated the parent; who almost immediately continued, "Do you know what's in his trunks?"

"La! mother," was the reply of the simple, the intelligent Bridget.

"We've been pretty lucky in lodgers till now;—so, I say, God preserve us from all scholars," exclaimed Mrs. Buttons, who dived into the kitchen, to inquire of her husband what references he had taken with the man in the parlour.

Little thought Silvertop of the evidences of his self-abstraction left behind him; he thought only of the beautiful, the ingenuous, the intelligent daughter of the breeches-maker.

It is clear that a great revolution had taken place in the cold, the ceremonious habits of our metaphysician; for the next morning, at breakfast, he called Bridget Buttons, simply—Biddy.

Having so called her, he leant two hours in his chair, and pondered another chapter on "Human Motives."

"Mr. Bunch, Sir," said Bridget, as she entered the apartment of the philosopher on the third morning.

"Bunch, Biddy?" asked Lorenzo; "who is Bunch?"

"The gentleman, Sir, who—who makes clothes, Sir," answered Bridget.

"Gentleman!" cried Silvertop, "you mean the—stay, why should not a tailor be a gentleman? For, in my essay on Human Motives——"

"He's a very punctual tradesman, Sir," continued Bridget.

"So your father tells me. Shew him in—wait, not yet. Biddy," said the philosopher in the mildest tone.

"Yes, Sir," said Bridget, correcting an evil disposition to laugh.

"Biddy, look at me, Biddy," cried Silvertop.

"La, Sir!" answered the girl, and her beautiful face was

suffused with a blush, and her large blue eyes swam in [illegible] some goodnature, as with a sudden twist of her elbow, [illegible] coquettishly complied with the request of the philosopher.

Lorenzo Silvertop sat almost breathless, with his eyes fi[illegible] upon the glowing face of the handmaid, who simperingly, [illegible] as if enjoying the eccentricity of the new lodger, pati[illegible] underwent the scrutiny. Lorenzo said no word to her; but [illegible] he gazed, thus communed in whispers with himself: "S[illegible] a Titian—pink and white—flesh like cream—Titian—[illegible] —Titian."

"There 's Mr. Bunch, Sir," at length observed Bridget.

"Quite an old master," exclaimed the rapt Lorenzo.

"No, Sir," replied Bridget, with one of her sweetest [illegible] "only three years set up."

"The simplicity of a dove," thought Silvertop. "Biddy—bless you, Biddy!"

"La! Sir."

"Shew him in." Bridget left the room, somewhat astonished at the warm benediction of the philosopher, who, himself, a little surprised by the enthusiasm, rose and took two or three turns in his room to collect himself for the interview with Bunch, the tailor, of whose visit it may here be necessary to say a few words.

Silvertop had ever manifested a most philosophical contempt of the tailor and his works: his outward man made no part of his studies, laudably directed to the higher and more ennobling developments of the mind. What should a man, with his thoughts fixed upon "Free Will," care for a hole in his waistcoat?—what, to true philosophy, was a coat of antique cut, by time and accident defrauded of half its buttons? Such was the lofty creed of Silvertop when he entered upon his new lodgings; yet had he not been there two complete days, ere he asked his landlord to recommend to him a tailor. We leave it to the metaphysical reader to seek out the cause of Silvertop's conversion to the decencies of dress; all we propose to our-

elves is, to narrate, not analyze. Hence, be it known, that Adam Buttons spoke in the very highest terms of the abilities and probity of Joel Bunch; eulogised the beautiful fidelity of his cut, praised, in measureless terms, the lustre and durability of his cloth, and closed with an eloquent tribute to the conscience of the tailor, as manifested in every item of his account. Buttons had known Bunch from his boyhood, and could, and would be answerable for him.

"Mr. Bunch, Sir," cried Bridget, opening the door, and shewing in the tailor. "Mr. Bunch, Sir, to measure you." Saying this, Bridget, like a young kitten, frisked from the room.

Joel Bunch — it would be unjust to him to omit his portrait — was exactly four feet six inches high. His back was not a back, but a wide slanting shelf; his nether man was sufficiently bulky for the upper works of a giant; whilst, for the lovers of curves, his right leg bent like Cupid's bow; his arms were very long — his hands large and bony; and his head, thatched with stiff, short black hair, of monstrous amplitude. It seemed as if nature in a freak, had flattened a fine tall fellow down into the compass of Bunch, but that he had bulged considerably in the process. Certain it is, Joel might have been pulled up into a tall fellow of his hands; his head seemed not made to glance nearer to earth than from an altitude of six feet two, and yet was it abated to four feet six. In a luckless, hot-blooded sally of his youth, Joel had lost the light of his left eye; quenched by a watchman's iron-shod staff, in a nocturnal row in Threadneedle-street. He yet carried a white scar across his nose from some undivulged mishap; and, if we glance at the loss of three front teeth, which loss gave a sibilant sound to all his words, we have enumerated the few personal defects of Joel Bunch. Dwelling on the last flaw, we may, in illustration of the high spirit of Joel, state that he had then an apprentice, doomed to Bridewell Clink, for having audaciously said of his master, that "he talked like his own goose."

"Is your name Bunch?" asked the metaphysician, somewhat astonished at the tailor.

"I have that honour," answered Bunch, with an habitual grin, which looping up either side of his upper lip, displayed to the full, his dental hiatus.

"Do you make for many people?" inquired Silvertop, suddenly fastidious—doubtful of his tailor.

"The first of people," replied Bunch, looking very loftily for his height. "This—my own—is my cut," added the tailor, twirling himself round.

"You made that coat?" asked Silvertop, a smile breaking at his mouth and eyes.

"I made this coat," replied Bunch.

"Did you? Then you could fit a corkscrew!" cried Lorenzo, laughing so heartily, that the humour carried away the doubts of Joel; and he took for a very delicate compliment what, at his first blush, he thought was a thing to be majestically resented. "Ha! ha!" cried the metaphysician.—"Ha! ha!" squeaked the tailor.

"I think, my man, you may measure me," said Lorenzo; and without waiting for another word, Bunch pulled forth his parchment slips, and placing a chair close to Silvertop, jumped on it. Already he had placed his hand on Silvertop's collar, when Lorenzo swung round, and the face of Bunch being, by means of the chair, on a level with his own, he looked full at him as he proceeded with his questions. "Do you make for any one in this house?"

"For all but the garrets," answered Joel.

"And not the garrets?" asked Silvertop; "and why not?" he needlessly inquired.

"Quite beyond me—too much in the skies—talk of first—first prin——"

"First principles?" suggested the metaphysician.

"That's it; first principles—of matter and all that. But, Sir, can't I measure you while we chat?—Thank you, Sir.—

Clever man in the back-garret, Sir.—A little up in the neck, Sir?" asked Bunch, proceeding to his task.

"As they wear 'em," answered Lorenzo, shortly.

"A little up there, Sir.—Yes, clever fellow, but devilish idle; lies in bed half the day, Sir, and t'other half talks of *viz* —*viz* something, Sir."

"*Vis inertiæ?*" asked Silvertop.

"That's it, and nothing less.—Rather low in the back, Sir?" inquired the measuring tailor.

"As they wear 'em," repeated Silvertop, with new veneration for the mode.

"That's it, Sir.—Very clever young man, Sir: wears his hair Sir, half down his coat—got very odd notions, Sir; says he has not the slightest doubt, Sir, that every thing is nothing, Sir.—How about the cuffs, Sir?—so deep, Sir?"

"I should say,—but, quite as they wear 'em," determined the metaphysician.

"Just as deep, then.—Buttons declares he's mad; but for my part, I think he's only lazy. He says, that if he likes to give his mind to it, he can make diamonds as big as cricket-balls."

"And what do you think?" asked Lorenzo.

"Why, Sir, if he could, Sir, I shouldn't mind measuring him, Sir: one day he nearly got into my books—it was a wonderful escape.—Lapel, broad, of course?—A wonderful escape for me."

"How?"

"Why, Sir, he came to my house, and talked about the—the penetration of matter, and asked me if I knew what was a first principle? And I said yes."

"And do you mean to say," asked Silvertop, "that you understand first principles?"

"He's a poor tradesman that doesn't, Sir,—ready money, Sir.—That will do for the coat, Sir.—Well, then, he talked and talked, and said there was no such thing in the world as colour, Sir; it was all a matter of eyesight; and more than that, there

was no nothing in the world; that there was no wood, no bricks, no stones, no trees—nothing at all real, but only as we thought it. Well, Sir, what do you think all this ended in?"

"I can't say," replied Silvertop; "but I am curious to learn."

"Why it ended in his asking me to make him a beautiful olive-green coat, a scarlet waistcoat, and a pair of claret-colour trousers. I'd nearly done it, Sir, on account of his talk. Yes, Sir, I had out my measure and was going to take him, when I looked in his face, and seeing his mustaches, my heart failed me."

"What! at his mustaches?"

"Don't know how it is—but books speak for themselves, Sir. If you was to see my ledger, among the bad debts, for every single flourish there's five double ones; that's how I mark 'em," said the enigmatical tailor.

"What do you mean by double flourish?" inquired the metaphysician.

"Why, the bad debts with mustaches, I used to make with two flourishes—I tried it for a year, Sir, and you should see the majority. The fact is, Sir, experience tells me never to take mustaches without a security."

"And did you tell the gentleman as much?" asked Lorenzo.

"No, Sir; I didn't like to hurt his feelings;—not, Sir, that philosophers, as I think, ever have any. So I took him on his own ground, and I said, 'Mr. Chisler, since you've convinced me that there is no colour, and no nothing—that it's all a vulgar prejudice what we see and touch, why can't you do as well in your rusty black coat, and your pepper-and-salt trousers with a hole in 'em, as if you'd a beautiful olive green, and a pair of bran new claret-colours?' So you see, Sir, I got rid of him on first principles."

"And the other lodgers, Mr. Bunch?"

"Most respectable gentlemen: Mr. Swanquill's father—that's the attorney, Sir—grows his own pine-apples at Brixton,

man of undeniable name, Sir. Then, for Mr. Balance, the gentleman at the Bank, his uncle has n't chick nor child, and doesn't know his wealth, Sir."

"Tell me, Bunch," and Silvertop hesitated—then proceeded, "what do you think of Miss Buttons?"

The tailor turning his one eye up in the grave face of the metaphysician, grinned and made answer, "A nice lump of a girl, Sir."

Lorenzo Silvertop, dressing Bridget Buttons in the radiant colours of his own imagination, had pictured her a glorious creature—a thing of infinite grace and beauty—a being worthy of a Titian to paint, and a Petrarch to eulogise. To Silvertop, the man of sensibility, of wisdom, of profoundest speculation, the breeches-maker's daughter was a goddess; to the hunchback tailor, she was "a nice lump of a girl." Thus do men of imagination make idols, and thus do the wise sons of earth, in the blindness of their ignorance, profane them. That a divinity to one man, should be merely "a lump of a girl" to another!

"What I was about to ask, Mr. Bunch—that is—I—you are not aware that Bridget thinks of any of the young men up stairs?" added Silvertop.

"She!" exclaimed Bunch with some animation, "she would n't be seen to wipe her feet upon any of 'em, Take my word for that, Sir—Bridget 's been taught her worth, Sir."

"I thought so; and yet in a lodging-house, where there are so many faces, and some very handsome,—for women, Mr. Bunch, are caught by good looks sooner than by——"

"I know it, Sir; nobody better," said the hunchback quickly, shaking his head, and stretching himself as he spoke. "I've seen life, Sir; and the best or worst half of life, Sir, is made up of women. And now, Sir——"

"She looks all purity," said Silvertop, "and then her colour! Yes," the metaphysician and lover of the arts, muttered complacently to himself—"a Titian—a perfect Titian —damme!—a Titian."

"And now, Sir," cried Bunch, "I have your measure for the whole suit—what do you think of the colours?"

"Titian—quite a Titian," repeated Silvertop, confounding Bridget Buttons with his coat, waistcoat, and trousers.

"Whatever you like, Sir, it 's all the same to me," and the tailor flung out upon the table a voluminous pattern-book.

"True—I see," said Lorenzo, "ha! now, what colour?" Silvertop, placing his hand upon his lips, stood silently pondering on the many hues beneath him. Some minutes he remained in profoundest thought, the tailor now glancing at the bits of cloth, and now up at Silvertop—now, deferentially pointing his finger towards one piece, now towards another, the metaphysician the while greatly perplexed by the different appeals of different hues. That he who had sounded the very depths of "Free Will" should be puzzled—his wits sent woolgathering by the colour of a waistcoat!

"Now, *I* should say," at length began the tailor, "*I* should say for a coat of my own——"

The metaphysician deigned no word, but knitting his brows, and frowning the dwarf to silence, he stepped one pace backward, and rang the bell. In an instant, the face of Bridget Buttons beamed at the door.

"Biddy, child," said Silvertop, beckoning her forward, "you must make a choice."

"La! Sir," cried Bridget, approaching the table.

"Well," cried the tailor, winking his wicked one eye at the maiden, "I should say no colour but this; no, if I was a young woman, and a gentleman *would* give me a riding-habit, this colour for my money."

"A riding-habit!" said Bridget, jerking round, and looking at the metaphysician, who looked again at her ripe, half-closed lips, as a boy looks at a peach. "A riding-habit! La, Sir!"

"Do you ride, Biddy?" asked Silvertop, in gentlest tones.

"You should see her gallop a bit at Easter on Blackheath," cried the tailor.

"La! Mr. Bunch," exclaimed Bridget, blushing to her eyelids, "but you are such a man!"

"She rides!" thought the delighted Silvertop, "and a woman on horseback is a most beautiful thing—she has such a presence—such a look of courage—such a hardy daring—" and then Lorenzo, speaking aloud, said to the tailor, "Measure Miss Buttons for a habit."

"With pleasure, Sir; but now the book's out, Sir, if you'll make up your own mind for——"

"The lady shall choose. Biddy, my dear," and Silvertop took Bridget's hand, "in these matters I want taste, and—and—" all this time the metaphysician was squeezing the tips of Bridget's fingers with the greatest cordiality, the tailor grinning at the process.

"Biddy," at length said the impatient Bunch, "you must choose for the gentleman."

"O, dear me! Well, I never—oh, Sir!" cried Bridget.

"She's as simple as a cherub," thought Silvertop.

"And so, let's begin with the coat," urged the unceremonious Bunch. "Come, suppose you was choosing for your husband——"

"Well, I never, Mr. Bunch!" said the blushing Bridget; and then she laughed and shewed her rows of pearls, and the metaphysician, gazing at her, drew his breath heavily, and again muttered—

"A Titian—damme!—a Titian."

"Now, Biddy," cried the hunchback, "now, for the gentleman's coat."

"If I must, I must," said Bridget, and she let her eyes wander over the pattern-book, the eyes of Silvertop following them. There was a moment's pause.

"Come, Biddy!" exclaimed the tailor.

"Don't be in a hurry, man," cried the metaphysician, his wrath rising; "and—just to please me—call the young lady Miss Buttons."

"Now, Miss Buttons," said the obedient, but grinning tailor. "Now for the coat."

"Well, I should say," observed Bridget hesitating, putting her finger to her lip, looking timidly at Lorenzo, and then pointing out a patch of bright apple-green—"I should say that."

"A very pretty coat it makes, too—great many of 'em worn," said the tailor; and he immediately stuck a pin into the patch of apple-green. "And now for the waistcoat."

It was evident that Bridget had already made her election of the waistcoat-pattern, for she instantly, and with some determination, stuck her finger upon a very brilliant thing—a crimson ground, worked with buttercups.

"So much for that—very handsome, too," said Bunch, and he stuck a second pin. "And now, Biddy—Miss Buttons—there is only one more choice to make."

"Another, Sir?" asked Biddy, looking with pretty helplessness at the all-admiring Silvertop.

"To be sure; it's a complete suit—there's another choice, of course," said the hunchback.

"Well, you are such a man!" said Bridget, and again she laughed, and blushed.

"Come, Miss Buttons," said the sarcastic tailor; "what shall we say for the—why, what stuff!—what trade's your father?"

"La, Mr. Bunch! Well—what is it? I'm sure I—how should I know? how should I tell anything of—if I must then —*that's* a pretty thing," and Bridget turned her head aside, as she ventured to place her finger on the cloth, touching it as timidly as if it were a nettle.

"Very gay; and what is n't common with gay things, it wears well," said Bunch; and he stuck a third pin into a piece of sky-blue kerseymere, the chosen pattern for Silvertop's nether garments.

Oh, ye gods of Mount Olympus! Oh, ye heroes—oh, ye

philosophers—oh, ye thousands, wisest of the wise turned into simpletons, and put into motley by the prettiest of the pretty —receive among ye a fellow-victim, take him to your arms; although the solemn metaphysician, the sloven Silvertop, he, under feminine influence, awhile disguised in a coat of apple-green, a vest of crimson dotted with buttercups of gold, the whole of his wardrobe to conclude with kerseymere of most celestial blue. Nor is this all, for Silvertop looks upon his livery with the profoundest complacency; he considers his colours, as of old the knights considered the badges of their ladye-loves, and thereupon glories in his metamorphosis.

Days pass, and every day Silvertop, thinking less of "Free Will," falls deeper into love. Bridget Buttons has risen upon his noon of life, the goddess of his future destiny. A goddess, nothing less; for how beautifully—how completely, can Silvertop explain away her defects,—nay, translate them into the most ravishing attractions! Her ignorance is the sweetest simplicity—her want of conversation, a most delicious humility —her frequent blushing, and a habit of playing with the corner of her apron an innocence, and that in the very heart of wicked London, almost pastoral. If she run along the floor, Silvertop thinks of Diana—if she put the tea-kettle on the fire, there is in her attitude, in the whole disposition of her figure, something inexpressibly Raffaelesque: and thus, Bridget Buttons, homely daughter of a homely breeches-maker, walks and talks, and does her housewifery, encircled and dignified by a halo of grace and beauty,—the gift of an imagination, to her a riddle and a mystery, a thing at first to be smiled at, and then made merry with. How many Lorenzos have wedded Bridgets; the dowry of the bride, nothing more than what the fancy of the bridegroom hath bestowed,—a fleeting good, waning almost with the honey-month!

"Well, Williams, did she let you in?" asked Silvertop one day of a younger friend, to whom he had disclosed the story of his sudden admiration.

"Who?" inquired the new-comer, carelessly taking his seat.

"Who? Why, man, who but—hark! hark! that's she—"

"Oh! ha! I understand," said Williams, suddenly recollecting the divinity of the house.

Did you ever hear a step like that?" asked Silvertop, just above his breath.

"I can hear nothing," answered the visitor.

"Ha! that's why it's so beautiful. She trips like a gazelle, Sir,—a gazelle; hark! there—there—now she's going up stairs—now she's— d—— that fellow!"

"What fellow?" asked the visitor.

"Why, that fellow in the first floor. Would you believe it, Sir, he plays the flute, Sir—the flute!"

"Well," said Williams, "and what of that?"

"What of that? Why—she has gone into his room. You'll hear him, Sir, in a minute, women like the flute, Sir—I know it. So it is; some men can dance, some sing, some play the flute, now I—" and the metaphysician looked suddenly crest-fallen—"I can do nothing."

"You're a capital hit at backgammon," said the comforting Williams.

"Backgammon, Sir!" exclaimed Silvertop, resenting even an allusion to the worthless accomplishment; "women don't care a dump for backgammon. Hark! she's coming down stairs—she's—no she isn't. This is too bad," said Silvertop; and then he quickly added, "but perhaps it's all for the best."

"Really Sir," said Williams, "you take this matter very seriously; is it, indeed, Sir, a matter of the heart?"

"I bought her a muff yesterday," said the melancholy metaphysician.

"But, Sir, you wouldn't marry her?" pressed Williams.

"And a gold chain," continued Silvertop.

"A servant at a lodging-house!" said Williams with a light laugh.

"You've not seen her, Sir," fired Silvertop; "you've not

seen her! Raphael would have worshipped her. All the regality of voluptuous beauty, Sir; all the irresistible force of feminine grace—all that something in the face that carries a man off his legs, Sir; all that dewy lustre of eye—that fruity pulpiness of lip—that—that—that—d—— her!"

"Really Sir," said Williams, very deferentially, "you should be cautious in this affair; because a girl in her situation of life —you perceive—if you should be caught."

"That's it; and that's—no—I don't hear her yet—that's why I want you to come here often. Listen: you know, Williams, you're a good-looking fellow—yes, you are; tall, and young, and impudent with the women, and all that. Now, I want you to look at her—you understand—to look at her."

"And what then, Sir?" asked Williams.

"What then? You can then tell me how she receives it; whether she frowns or laughs, and—and so I shall be satisfied, confirmed of my hopes of her—of her—" and a slight flush coloured the metaphysician's cheeks, "of her affection."

"You've never talked to her of—of affection, Sir?" inquired Williams, with some hesitation.

"When I gave her the muff yesterday," replied Silvertop, "she said she thought she could love me."

"Only thought she could," observed Williams.

"But, don't you perceive, Sir," rejoined Silvertop, "there was great delicacy in that! And when I gave her a gold chain——"

"What did she say then, Sir?"

"Then, Sir—but you should have seen her look! Guido never did anything finer—then she owned that I was the man to make any woman happy. I am forty-eight; and no woman before ever said as much to me. Now, you as a painter, Williams, will go mad about her; such form, such outline, such colour—she's an angel, Williams."

"But she's a long time up stairs," said the artist.

"A d—d cat," growled the metaphysician. On this there was silence for some minutes, and Silvertop sat, intently listening. At length he jumped to his legs, and passionately exclaimed, "Why should she go up stairs?—I don't hear her, Sir; not a footstep, Sir; not a sound, Sir; not the lightest."

At this moment, Mr. Swanquill began playing upon his flute, "Begone, dull care!"

"You hear that, Sir," shouted Silvertop; "now that any woman could give up the conversation, the intellectual talk of a man like myself, to hear a fellow make a noise like that with a piece of wood! And there she'll stay, Sir—stay, with her ears nailed to that puppy's fingering; why the devil, Sir, couldn't she hear the flute in her own room—I ask that, Sir?"

Williams, who was in no condition to return a satisfactory answer, remained silent.

"They're all alike, Sir, all alike," continued Silvertop: "women, Sir, are animals, mere animals, Sir; not a bit more, Sir; they've no minds, Sir; no more minds than sieves—no more."

Here the musician stopped, and a smile began to break in Silvertop's face, and he stood breathless, listening for the foot of Bridget on the stairs. Suddenly, however, the minstrel struck up in a high key, the soul-inspiring air of "Bob and Joan;" Silvertop's face became black with passion; he gnashed his teeth, and striking his clenched fist upon the table, he roared, "I've done with her, it's all over, thank God! No; the woman who could listen to that—my dear fellow, let us go out, I'll change my lodgings to-night. No, no, anything but that tune; anything but that." And the writer on "Free Will" sank gasping in his chair, the musician above continuing his dulcet strains. After a few minutes, Silvertop, who had sat in agony, violently pulled the bell. Bridget tripped down from the flute-player, and appeared before the metaphysical Silvertop.

"Did you ring, Sir?" asked Bridget.

"I am going out—going out," growled Silvertop, frowning most furiously.

"Yes, Sir," said Bridget; and with no further words she quitted the room. A pause ensued.

"Williams," at length spoke the philosopher; "Williams, you know the Cleopatra of Michael Angelo?"

"Very well, Sir," replied the painter; "a mighty, a glorious thing."

"Humph!" said Silvertop, musing. "No, I don't mean Cleopatra, that's not quite it. But you recollect Eve, Sir; Michael Angelo's Eve, Sir?"

"Perfectly," said Williams; "magical union of grandeur and sweetness."

"The Eve, Sir, plucking the apple? You recollect the—the shuddering consciousness that seems to creep over her—the shadow falling on her lustrous face, betokening the unborn consequence!"

"I recollect, Sir; you have again placed her quite before me," said the painter.

"Well, Sir," continued the philosopher, rubbing his knees, "did you see nothing of that just now?"

"Where, Sir?"

"Here, Sir," answered Silvertop.

"Michael Angelo's Eve!" cried the astonished painter.

"I mean, Sir, if you had your eyes, did you see nothing when the girl came in that—that at first forcibly reminded you of the freshness of Titian, suddenly saddened into the severity of Buonarotti—I mean, when I frowned at her, there was Eve, Sir; every inch, Sir; a perfect Eve."

"She is very handsome—a remarkably fine girl," said Williams; "good teeth, too."

"Teeth!" cried Silvertop; "good God! Sir, look at her outline."

"Very nice," said the painter.

"Nice!" exclaimed the philosopher; "did you see the line

from her ear to her shoulder — is there anything like it? In all the great masters, anything comparable to it?"

"It's a pity she hasn't a better taste in music," said Williams—we think, maliciously.

"O, an animal, Sir, quite an animal; I have done with her!" cried the inexorable metaphysician. "Thank God, I've found her out in time; it might have been too late, Sir! but I've done with her."

A low tap was heard at the door, and then it was immediately opened, and again Bridget Buttons stood before Silvertop. He sat in his chair like one enchanted, gazing with unmoved eyes upon the face of the maiden, who with downcast looks, gently advanced towards him. Something she carried in her open right hand; Silvertop spoke not. Bridget approached his chair, and smiling, and her eyes being slowly raised to a snow-white garment, carefully folded, and borne in her right palm, she spoke in most melodious voice, "You said you was going out, Sir."

"Well?" said the mollified metaphysician—"well?"

"Your aired shirt, Sir;" and saying this, Bridget put forth her right hand towards the sitting philosopher, who looked now at the folded shirt, and now at the bearer; his rigid face relaxing into a look of the deepest devotion, and so for two or three minutes, he sat, silent and admiring. Bridget stood, and received the fire of his eyes with nerve incomparable. She made no attempt to lay the shirt upon the table; the philosopher offered not to take it from her hand; and thus the maid and the metaphysician might have remained, we know not how long, two statues, "to enchant the world," had not Williams began, we fear to keep down his laughter, to cough very violently. On this, Silvertop gently half-rose from his seat, and opening his hand, advanced it to the shirt-carrying hand of Bridget; she, with sympathising delicacy, shifted the garment from her palm to the palm of Silvertop, as though it were a rose-leaf passed from hand to hand, when, the opera-

tion silently finished, Bridget, with a new smile and almost a look at Silvertop, swam from the room.

The metaphysician stood, gazing at the door, with the shirt in his hand; he then laid it reverently upon the table, and fully awakened to his state of bliss, giving himself a smart slap on the thigh, he cried, with an exulting voice, "She has me again!"

Williams was about to speak, when a loud knock at the door, demanded the attention of Silvertop. "Hush!" cried he; "I think I know who this is. Come in."

In obedience to the mandate, a tall, rustic-looking man entered the room, and stood, now stroking his hair, and now smoothing his hat. O!" cried Silvertop, "take a chair, Mr. Hawkweed;" and Mr. Hawkweed immediately complied. "Well, and how do we get on? O! you may speak before this gentleman; how do we get on?"

"Capital, Sir; as well as heart could wish: quite purely, Sir," replied Hawkweed.

"Well; let me hear: proceed," said Silvertop; "what happened yesterday?"

"Going down stairs," said Hawkweed, "I winked my eye, and pinched her elbow."

"Well?" asked the metaphysician, with an anxious face.

"She fetched me a slap on the cheek, and told me not to pinch my betters."

"I thought as much," said Silvertop. "Well, what next?"

"In the afternoon, I chucked her under the chin, and trod upon her toe."

"He!" cried Silvertop, "what followed then?"

"She called me a ploughman brute, and said her father should give me warning."

"Yes, to be sure," said the satisfied philosopher. "Well, that's all, I suppose?"

"When she let me in last night," continued Hawkweed,

"I caught her round the neck, and swore I'd have a kiss. She said, if I did, she'd squeal. I did have a kiss."

"Well!" exclaimed Silvertop.

"And she did n't squeal," said Hawkweed.

"To be sure, it was late, and she might have disturbed the house, and—there, that will do, Mr. Hawkweed; you need n't kiss her again," said Silvertop.

"Just as you please, Sir, it 's all the same to me;" and with this avowal, Mr. Hawkweed scraped a bow, and lounged out of the room.

"There now — what do you think of him? Handsome fellow for a clown, is n't he? — red cheeks, curly hair, tall, stalwart rogue — just the animal to take a girl's fancy, if she had n't some refinement; and yet, you hear—you hear how she resents his advances!"

"Who is he?" asked Williams, in astonishment.

"The fellow lives here—luckiest thing in the world, Sir; he took the attic the very day that the scamp with the mustache left. Well, Sir, I've retained him; treated him to make love to the girl, Sir; and you hear," cried the exulting Silvertop— "you hear what she thinks of it. You know I can't be too cautious; but now, I think, I may swear for her. It would be hard at my time of life to be tricked, and so I—I am justified in making every experiment upon her affection."

"And is it possible, Sir," questioned Williams; "do you really propose marrying the wench?"

"Wench! Raphael never painted wenches, Sir; and she's quite a piece of the old masters—don't say wench, Williams—is Corregio's Venus a wench? Stay," continued Silvertop, as Williams rose to depart. "You are new here—she has not seen you before: now, as you go out, just — you understand me—just look at her."

"Well, Sir, if 'twill give you any satisfaction, as far as a wink goes, I——"

"You know what I mean, and as a friend, let me know

how she receives it." Saying this, Silvertop rang the bell, and Bridget appeared to shew Williams to the door. The metaphysician sat with quickened ears to catch the slightest sound. He heard no syllable; all was hushed. Surely Williams was not all this time in the passage, and yet Silvertop had not heard the street-door close. Was it, could it be Bridget smothering a laugh? The philosopher violently pulled the bell — there was a hurrying sound in the passage — the street-door was flung to—and in the same instant, the placid Bridget presented herself to the summons of Silvertop.

"Did you ring, Sir?" asked Bridget.

"I—Biddy!" and Silvertop looked in her face, and smiled at its sweet tranquillity. "Biddy—I have changed my mind —I shall stay at home to-night, Biddy."

"Very well, Sir—thank you, Sir," and Bridget taking the shirt, tripped from the room.

"I'll marry her—I will," said Silvertop to himself, "and finish 'Free Will' afterwards."

A fortnight had elapsed, and every thing had jumped to confirm the metaphysician in his goodly purpose of marriage. He had received numberless proofs of the purity of Bridget—of her ingenuousness—her decided preference for him above all men. Silvertop felt proudly satisfied that he was the first man who had taught her heart to throb with sweet emotions. She had never — he could take his affidavit to the flattering fact—never loved before. He, Lorenzo Silvertop, was Bridget Buttons' first and only passion.

"I will immediately speak to her father," was the determination of Silvertop one morning after breakfast, such resolve being, we strongly suspect, assisted by a remarkably pretty cap, worn for the first time by Bridget. "It is but a mob-cap," said the admiring Silvertop, as the girl left the room; "yet on her head it becomes classical. I'll speak to her father."

Even as Silvertop muttered the words, a knock was heard at his door, and who should present himself but Adam Buttons, breeches-maker, and father to Bridget. "Some men" thought Silvertop, "would take this as a happy, augury," then said to the breeches-maker, "Mr. Buttons, take a chair."

"You're very good, Sir—very good, indeed," said Adam, seating himself, and trying to look at his ease.

"Mr. Buttons," said Silvertop, "you are a very happy man, Mr. Buttons."

"Why, Sir, I manage to make both ends meet, Sir: pay the rates, and all that," said Adam.

"But, Sir, you have a peculiar source of happiness," observed Silvertop.

"'Tis n't for me to brag, Sir," replied the modest breeches-maker; "but I believe my cut's as good as any in the city; I've made, Sir, for two Lord Mayors in my time, three Sheriffs, and half-a-dozen Aldermen."

"I alluded, Mr. Buttons, to your happiness as a father," said Silvertop.

"Why, yes, Biddy's a good un, Sir,—a real good un; shall lose our right-hand, Sir, when she goes."

"Goes!" exclaimed the metaphysician; and he felt a spasm about the region of his heart.

"Gals must marry, Sir, some time," said the breeches-maker.

"True," replied the philosopher.

"There's no help for it, Sir; none, Sir, unless, to be sure, they keep single, and that's all very well, Sir, when father and mother's alive; but, as I'm getting old, Sir, and, howsomever, Sir, to make a long matter short, I shall not be sorry to get Biddy off my hands."

Silvertop unconsciously shrank at the homeliness of the breeches-maker, and then prepared himself to receive the proposition of the father, who was evidently come to have with his lodger a proper understanding.

"You have been very good indeed to us, since you have been here—indeed, I may say, quite a blessing to the house," said Buttons.

"Say not a word about it," entreated the modest Silvertop.

"I 'm sure Bridget does nothing but talk about you—I 'm sure, Sir—I—I ask your pardon, Sir; but I can hardly get out what I was going to say."

"I believe, Mr. Buttons, I can almost interpret the object of your visit," said Silvertop.

"Only to think, Sir—if you should!" remarked Buttons.

"Is it not about the—the settlement—that is, the marriage of your daughter?"

"You 're as good as a witch, Sir."

"Believe me, Mr. Buttons," said the metaphysician, offering his hand to the breeches-maker, "believe me, Sir, I was about to address you, and this very morning, too, on that most interesting subject."

"Only to think!" repeated Buttons.

"Pray do not mistake me—but you give no dowry with Miss Bridget?"

"Dowry, Sir?" asked Buttons, possibly unconscious of the meaning of the word—"dowry?"

"I mean, you give her no fortune?" asked Silvertop.

Buttons gently rubbed his hands, smiled, and answered, "Why, Sir, not much in that way."

"Well, never mind," said Silvertop; "my means, though not great, are tolerably well."

"I thought he would—I was sure of it," was the silent opinion of the gladdened father; "I knew he 'd give her something handsome."

"I shall put you to no expense whatever," said Silvertop, "I shall defray all the expenses of the ceremony—the fitting out of the bride—indeed, every thing myself."

The munificence of the lodger was too much for the landlord; Buttons rose, and seizing both hands of Silvertop, declared him

to be the noblest gentleman that ever lived. What had he—Buttons—done to have deserved such a friend? "You will indeed, make Bridget happy," said her father.

"I hope," said Silvertop, very meekly, "I hope I shall."

"Well, Sir, as all that 's settled, I hope you won't think that I 'm in much of a hurry, if I say Monday next. Will that day be quite convenient, Sir?" asked Buttons.

"Monday next!" There was something in the naming of this day—in this fixing of the time, that made Silvertop pause; it was but for a minute, for with admirable self-possession, he observed—"Well, as it is to be—perhaps, the sooner the better. Say Monday."

"Bridget, Sir, has fixed on Bow church. No objection, I hope, to Bow church, Sir?"

"None whatever: only, I have to request that the ceremony may pass off as quietly as possible, let us have no crowd, Mr. Buttons: don't let us make a show of ourselves," said Silvertop.

"Certainly not, Sir—it is n't decent; just a dozen friends or two, and nobody more. Biddy, Sir, has set her heart upon Gravesend, Sir; no objection, I hope, to Gravesend?" asked Buttons.

"Gravesend — what do you mean? Gravesend!" said Silvertop.

"To spend the honeymoon at, Sir; you know, we can all go down and see her at Gravesend, Sir; a pretty place, Sir, for young married folks, Sir."

"If Biddy have a preference for Gravesend," said Silvertop.

"She 's such a gal for shrimps, Sir," cried Buttons, "and so fond of the sea. What 's more, she 's never ill."

"We can talk about Gravesend; all the principal points are, I hope, settled. The ceremony is to take place on Monday —at Bow church——"

"And you, Sir, see to the dinner, and all that? Ecod! Sir, I 'm the happiest breeches-maker in the world—I am, indeed, Sir; and how happy Bridget's husband will be!"

"I hope it," said Silvertop.

"I 'm sure of it," exclaimed Buttons; and as he spoke he opened the door, and forcibly pulled in Bunch, the hump-backed tailor, Bridget Buttons, with downcast eyes, following him.

"Mr. Bunch!" said Silvertop with dignified surprise.

"Thank him, Joel, for the best friend you have in the world," and Buttons pushed Bunch towards the metaphysician; "thank him—he 'll find the wedding dinner—fit out your wife, and all."

"Wife! wife!" cried Silvertop, turning pale; "what is all this?"

"My wife, Sir, as is to be on Monday, Sir," said Bunch, introducing Bridget Buttons.

"Marry you!" screamed the metaphysician.

"It 's been a settled job these six months," cried Bunch, smirking.

"You marry him!" raved Silvertop at Bridget, looking with inexpressible loathing at the self-complacent lump of deformity—"you marry him! Impossible. What! do you love him?" roared Silvertop. "Answer me. I say, do you love him?"

Bridget Buttons took up the corner of her apron, glanced at Silvertop, then at Bunch, and colouring, said—"La! Sir."

The metaphysician groaned; his whole frame quivered with passion, and it was with considerable difficulty that he asked—"If—if this infernal porwiggle is to marry your daughter—what did you come to ask of me?"

"To give her away, Sir," said the breeches-maker.

To the horror of the metaphysician, Bridget Buttons, that incarnation of grace and sweetness, became the wife of Joel Bunch. The happy couple were married at ten o'clock in the morning at Bow church, and at six were seen in a

Gravesend boat, embarked for the place of their honeymoon. Bridget looked remarkably well; her riding-habit, her muff, tippet, and gold-chain attracting the admiration of all beholders.

Lorenzo Silvertop is still a bachelor, and still at work on "Free Will."

AN OLD HOUSE IN THE CITY.

ANTIQUITY hath abundance of charity—she pleadeth for the mighty and the mean, the magnanimous and the contemptible. Touched by her influence, we gaze with reverence at the great Pyramid, and can look with interest at a gibbet—we venerate the dust of a sage, and linger even by the mummy of a lawyer. Placed in her circle, her host of shadows passing before us, we not only bow to poets and philosophers, but can nod and give a "good den" to usurers and pickpockets. The veriest rascal, seen through the haze of centuries, becomes picturesque. Who, for example, can see Guido Fawkes as he really moved and lived? Who can place before himself the veritable Claude du Val? The vulgar cold-blooded conspirator is a fearful conjuration of romance, the highwayman a sprightly ill-used gentleman—the dark lantern of the fanatic is lighted with a fiery star, the fiddle of the cut-purse sounds in truth a most taking instrument. And why this delusion—why this charity towards the long departed? Is it not that we feel they are no longer partakers of our state of existence, but that they form a portion of that mystery, to the attainment of which life is but the preface? Is our homage that of ignorance towards intelligence? Is it, that, feeling a tree of knowledge springs alike through every coffin, our prejudices as to the peculiar earth are lost in speculation on the fruit? It may, we feel, be apples of Paradise—it may be apples of the Dead Sea; but whatever the produce, it can only grow from a dead man, and thus the corpse of the poorest slave has higher wisdom than a breathing Solomon. This, however, is more serious—if you will, more dull—than we intended. Only desirous of

proving how time can plead for even antiquity, how evil may be hallowed by the consecrated garments of years, we break off our sermon. This we will say, such lovers are we of the real antique, that we would not destroy a single twig from a upas-tree, if the said tree had flourished for centuries—no, let pestilence drop from the branches, if the branches were really and truly old.

With such benevolent feelings have we many a time gazed at the mansion of Messieurs Cat and Condor—yes, with no less amiable emotions have we beheld their "Old House in the City." We never asked our friends, but have little doubt that the walls were built of the first bricks imported by the Earl of Arundel—to our eyes more valuable than the bricks of Babylon—writ with far deeper, far more recondite mysteries. Many a time, our back supported by an opposite door, with upturned looks and folded arms, have we contemplated the external features of that "old house." Yet, ere we narrate our wayward musings, it is right we give precedence to the opinions of "sage, grave men," of "great ones of the city." We will inflict on the reader but two or three examples.

"Pray, Sir (I am strange to business), what may be the character of the firm of Messrs. Cat and Condor?" This question has a thousand times been put by a thousand different querists: the answer has ever been, "An Old House in the City." Such the words, but conveyed in no less than a thousand different tones: some replying in a note of explosive surprise, some with a pitying sneer at the interrogator, some with a chuckle at his boorish ignorance, some with deep solemnity, taking especial care to dwell upon the "old."

Having produced the gravest testimony as to the antiquity of the house, we may now venture to add our evidence to that of serious matter-of-fact witnesses. We have in many a reverie read the walls of the house—we have dived into their mysteries—we have deciphered their hierographs, and, rapt by our discoveries, we have lost sight of the bricks; as, in read-

ing Homer or Shakspeare, we are wholly oblivious of the printer and the papermaker. Thus our "House" has at times seemed to us built up of human bones, a mansion composed of the spoils of the churchyard. We have seen the pithless joints of the old and the young—we have beheld the skull of the widow and the orphan cemented in one compact mass —and still the walls grew higher and higher, as new materials fell into the hands of the builders—and every bone had its legend, every skull its curious history.

Anthony Cat—merry, simple-minded man!—whilst seated in his leather-bottomed chair, conning his daily ten hours' task, never dreamed of out-door opinions. He knew the walls of the old house were in good condition, for they had been surveyed! but for any types or texts to be found in them, he no more thought of such superstition than the fly in a painted paper cage thinks of the daubing of its prison. Anthony Cat professed himself a Christian, and proved himself a man of business. For ourselves we care not so much for professions as for deeds; therefore, waving what Anthony said, we may state what he seemed—for in mind he may have been an infidel but in practice he was (in pounds, shillings and pence) a true believer. Anthony owed his first advance in life to his humanity. In the first American war, though he only held a situation partaking of the errand-boy and the junior clerk, he was at once a philanthropist and an admirer of his master's daughter. Being on principle averse to the war, he conceived that, by lessening the resources of his country, he might best accelerate the advent of peace—to which end, whenever dispatched for stamped sheets, he six times out of ten supplied the office from his own garret, putting the purchase-money in his own pocket. How, it will be asked, was the cheat effected? By the unassisted genius of the simple Anthony, who, to while away the dreariness of his leisure, would cut the stamps from old extinct bonds, and with the most praiseworthy dexterity, with a nice ingenuity worthy a Chinese, would let them

into plain parchment. "This was the way to thrive;" and Anthony had the double satisfaction of assisting the cause of national peace and individual profit. This is a truth, a truth without one thread of fiction. In time Anthony became the second clerk—still his heart grew bigger, still his purse dilated. However, a proposal for his fair young mistress was met by the indignation of her father, and Anthony was about to be discarded, when an accidental discovery of a false stamp procured him another interesting interview with his master. The old gentleman was full of virtuous indignation, and talked of hanging. Anthony fell upon his knees, and, to the horror of the elderly lawyer, confessed a long catalogue of forgeries; nay more, avowed himself ready to publish to the world the name of every client whose property had been placed in jeopardy by a spurious stamp. Of course the master gave quills, ink, and paper to the penitent for the purposes of justice? Not so; the lawyer was a discreet man—were the iniquity of his clerk made known, his business, his connexion was gone! Anthony rightly interpreted the silence of his master, and again and again proposed to make "a clean breast." The good man got up a visible shudder at what he termed the consequences of a prosecution—he could not see an old, though worthless servant, hanged! Will it be believed by the modest reader? The instant Anthony was assured that his master would not consign him to the gallows, he again prayed that he might take his daughter to the church. The master paused at the request; but, at length, wisely thinking that the best way to stop the mouth of his clerk would be to give him a wife, he consented to the match. This auspicious beginning was followed by "thick coming" successes, and in the course of a few years, behold Anthony Cat partner of "An Old House in the City." He looked worthy of his prosperity—his face was ever in a glow of satisfaction, his voice rung like glass, and he would rub his hands with an air that told you they were as pure as his own pounce. And yet no

man had a sterner eye to the "inevitable decencies" of life. Though he was outwardly smiling, meek, and gracious, he had in his way of business a heart more than Roman. Little knew they of the interior of Anthony Cat, who judged him by his short laugh, his venerable jest, or his one ballad at the club—nay, they who paused at his Hoxton Villa, garnished with potted myrtles and geraniums, and saw the owner pacing his lawn with a pink 'twixt his fingers brushing his nose, did him wrong if they confounded him with the same Cat setting a suit in his "Old House in the City,' or following it out at Westminster.

Augustus Condor, the second partner, seemed expressly sent into the world to do two things—to keep accounts and eat a dinner. He accomplished the double purpose of his being with surpassing ability. No man had greater powers of calculation and digestion. His moral lining was, we are convinced, composed of a ready reckoner and a cookery book. Place him before the cedars of Lebanon, and his first thought would be to calculate the height and girth of every cedar tree, and next its market price. Fix him on the shores of the Ganges, and his first inquiry would be if turtle swarmed there? and Condor knew himself, and so knowing, left the difficulties of consultation to his more mercurial partner. Cat looked to the pockets of the house, and Conder to the belly.

Having introduced the reader to the two partners, we will now take him into their office. So, being entered, one gentle question, dispassionate reader. (We suppose it to be the first time our friend has entered the office of a lawyer.) Does nothing new and strange strike upon your sense? Be there no "odours" here? Do you feel assured that there are no subtle particles flying about you, no peculiar emanations? Do you not yearn and gasp for the sweet air of even a London street? Does not your heart sink, and your lips part in sickness? Has nothing fatal to your genial every-day flow of blood entered your system? Your finger to your pulse—now,

as there is an immortal soul in truth, are you the same man you were ere you crossed the threshold? No; for you are not made of oak or quartz—you share the common attributes of our common nature, and you are a changed man. You ask why is this? We who have felt the influence of the *genius loci*—we whom no experience can blunt to it, cannot clearly divine the mystery—we can only speculate. Look at those piled rows of japanned boxes. We think much of the evil, a great portion of the malaria, issues thence—there are the deeds of the dying, the dead, and——but we will not increase the number of the parties, though we sacrifice alliteration. Surely within all those tombs all cannot be sound—no, there is the decay of truth, the rottenness of falsehood. Though some may be wholesomely embalmed with honest ink and wax, all do not "smell sweet, and blossom in the pounce." Thence rise the vapours, thence the noxious exhalations. And hark! Hear ye no sounds? A voice of wailing and misery, a sobbing, a groaning, as from a crucified spirit? though the notes are fine, an ear unsophisticated may catch them. From whence, you ask, this anguish? from whence this rending lamentation? We answer, from poor common sense locked up, gyved, disfigured, racked by a thousand menials, some called Whereas, some Notwithstanding, some Aforesaid, and some with names of gibberish, counting more syllables than the Spaniard. Even as the dainty spirit Ariel was imprisoned in the pine by Sycorax, that "blue-eyed hag," so is poor common sense captive to an unrelenting beldam. And, reader, did you ever see the thumbscrew or the steel-boot? You have; and your cheek has wrinkled, and your heart fallen as you gazed on those inventions of the devil, and thought of the blackened flesh, the spurting blood, the cracking bone and broken marrow of the victim? Well, screw and boots may be made from the skins of inoffensive sheep; from rags cast from a beggar, and —but we must pause. We have given loose to a morbid imagination. We have (it is our failing) been dreaming a

day-dream, in which have mingled all kinds of monstrous horrors, whilst indeed we were comfortably seated in the office of Messrs. Cat and Condor. We have taken a journey to a den of guilt and misery, while our feet reposed on the matting of "an Old House in the City." It is fortunate we are awake, or we know not how basely we might have misrepresented that young pale-faced, sandy-haired clerk, with a very white shirt-collar. Who knows how we might have typified the respectable partners themselves, the worthy Cat and Condor, those solid pillars of the "Old House in the City." We have now to dismiss from the mind of our companion all that we have said; we are not justified in attempting to shake the nerves of any man, therefore the reader may as frequently as he pleases defy the atmosphere of an attorney's office; for our part, being naturally delicate, we love sweet air, and respect our health.

"Very sorry, very sorry indeed; but Sir, money is money, and people are so difficult."

For the wisdom enshrined in these words, the reader is indebted to Mr. Cat, who, with one of his blandest smiles, his eyes twinkling through his spectacles, his body gently inclined, and the tip of each thumb and finger nicely touching the tip of its brother, assured a client that money was money, and to give Cat his due, he was capable of no better definition. To his client, however, money was liberty, peace of mind, every thing; he bit his lip, his eyes glared, and it was with some effort that with apparent composure the stranger asked, "When may I have the money?"

"To-morrow, Sir, to-morrow."

The tone and manner of Cat were most convincing, and yet they evidently failed to assure his client, who, it must be conceded, ought to have been impressed with the promise of his agent, as the worthy man had almost every day, for the previous fortnight, repeated it. To-morrow bubbled from the mouth of Cat as freely as water from a source—but Lieu-

tenant Lacy, we regret to say it, was a suspicious man, and when looking at the support of "the Old House" from the crown to the gaiters, he turned upon his heel, and said, "Then I 'll come to-morrow." It was but too plain that he quitted the office an unbeliever. Indeed, to confess all, as he descended the staircase a mutilated oath escaped his lips, an oath in which Messrs. Cat and Condor were very deeply interested. However, something must in charity be allowed to the ignorance of the man. How was it possible that he, a sailor, could judge of the difficulties of what Mr. Cat ever delighted to call "a financial operation?" What may appear very fair and simple to an unlearned mariner, abounds with perplexities in the eyes of prudent attorneys like Cat and Condor. Two and two may make four on the quarter-deck, but such false calculation is not to pass in "an Old House in the City."

Lieutenant Lacy, in addition to his Majesty's commission and three body-wounds, had a wife and five children. Whilst his laurels were growing at sea, his olive branches had flourished at home, and though they were all fair and beautiful, Elizabeth, a girl of seventeen, was the fairest, the most beautiful—"an angel, if ever an angel walked," to use the words of a young gentleman, transfixed one summer evening by her graces: and the exclamation must be received as a triumphant evidence of the loveliness of Elizabeth, for certain we are that the speaker was not one of those happy people who, in their dreams, awake or sleeping, see angelic faces: he had no standard of beauty, but paid an instinctive homage to its influence. Charles Bars was himself the child of an officer, and when, on the 2d of May, his eyes met the bright orbs of Elizabeth, as, accompanied by her mother and younger sister, she walked in the Temple Gardens, he felt an admiration so uncontrollable that he three times thrust his head beneath her bonnet, nay, so powerful was his emotion, that it absolutely drove her from the spot. When she vanished from his sight, and he was prevented by a sense of delicacy (for we are almost certain that he de-

spised the uplifted cane of a meddling gentleman) from following her, so profoundly was he touched that he flung away an almost whole cigar, and for that evening ceased to smoke. Vesuvius itself could not give a stronger evidence of what Mrs. Siddons once called "Desperate tranquillity."

Let the reader suffer a day to have elapsed, and we will then return to the office of Cat and Condor. Enter Lieutenant Lacy; he is met with a smile so gracious, so cheering, by the partner of the "Old House," that he returns it with a look of perfect satisfaction. "How have I wronged this excellent man! doubtless there were many difficulties in the way of the negotiation; money, on the best security, *is* scarce." Now, though Lieutenant Lacy spoke no syllable of this, every word of it passed through his brain as Mr. Cat, having again carefully deposited himself in his chair, stretched forth his right leg, and began with an encouraging air to pat its calf. He then placed both his hands in his breeches-pocket, and—— (credulous Lieutenant Lacy, for he thought he heard the crumpling of bank-notes) observed, "I am very sorry." As he said this, his client leapt to his feet with a noise that even awakened the calculating Condor, who, dropping his jaw, coolly ran his tongue round his upper lip, and stared at the disturber: Cat widened his mouth, smiled with great industry, and to some very rapid and homely queries of the Lieutenant, again exclaimed, "To-morrow." Here, we regret to record it, the sailor lost all respect for the representatives of the "Old House," and in a tone not to be mistaken, demanded back his papers. Cat smiled consent, and opening the door, asked one of the clerks in the outer-office for "Lieutenant Lacy's *bill*."

The Lieutenant was a brave man, but at the sound of the word bill, he looked the veriest coward. The clerks of the "Old House" were celebrated for despatch, and in a trice the last item, viz. the consultation of that day, was added to the account, and placed between the fingers of the debtor, who found himself "written down" forty pounds in the books of

Cat and Condor. Somewhat recovered from the first shock, the Lieutenant promised payment, but again loudly demanded his papers. Again Condor gaped, and again Cat smiled. "Certainly, Lieutenant Lacy — to be sure, when our bill is paid." Now Lieutenant Lacy had not forty shillings.

We have said the Lieutenant was a suspicious man, and we hate suspicion, for ninety-nine times out of a hundred it takes away more than it secures. A man whose road lies through a wild forest, if told that the place be infested by a ravenous wolf, suspects every thing that moves about him to be no other than the wolf; if a fox, a hare, or a poor rabbit start at his feet, he trembles, fearing it the wolf; nay, if a little squirrel crack nuts on his native branch, the suspicious man stands aghast, assured he hears the wolf; and if a few yards within his journey's end a pretty glowworm glisten in a bush, he runs hallooing home, and gathering all his neighbours about him, vows he hath escaped by a miracle, having beheld the very eye of the very wolf! Now had nobody filled the poor fellow's head with terrible stories of the beast, he had scarcely thought of it, but had gone through the wood enjoying the singing birds, the waving trees, and the breathing flowers!

We know not whether Lieutenant Lacy had given ear to any malignant gossip touching the "Old House," or whether his present valuation of Messrs. Cat and Condor was the result of his unassisted observations, but certain we are that he viewed the still smiling Anthony with that kind of interrogative glance which the reader may have seen put by one gentleman in a crowd when the enquirer has lost his pocket-book or repeater. "Are you a thief?" demands the despoiled with all the force and eloquence of eyes. When Mr. Cat made the surrender of his client's papers provisional on the payment of his client's bill, Lieutenant Lacy, though silent, put a question, and Cat, though he spoke not, smiled an answer. Cat was a philosopher, it is true, for a libel written or spoken he had a vein of unexampled tenderness, but for mere dumb

opinion, for the thoughts that dwell within the chambers of men's brains, they no more affected him than they could wound the cynic through his tub. No, Cat was a liberal, he was for the free exercise of thought so long as thought went about its business, speaking no word and scrawling no pot-hook. It is clear Lieutenant Lacy was poorly matched against such a man, who was so strong in the consciousness of his own integrity, that when his intemperate client "prepared to chide," the lawyer beckoned in the senior clerk to listen to the vituperation. Whether the Lieutenant felt his want of eloquence, or whether, like a high-minded player, he refused to exhibit before so poor an audience, we cannot decide. Sure we are, that the instant the sailor caught the eye of the clerk, that instant the speaker became dumb; and more, without deigning to accept an invitation significantly put to him by the smiling Cat, he swung from the office of "the Old House" with a promptitude and decision worthy of Drake or Blake.

We spoke of an invitation on the part of Cat, and must trespass a few lines in the way of comment. Has the reader —we beg his pardon, of course he has—beheld a beautiful pair of lips, red and ripe as cherries, that, placed within the reach of even Origen himself, would win him to their audible cry of "Kiss me?" Shew us the man who hath the marble entrails to withstand the invitation, and we shall honour him for a true philosopher, or despise him for a cowardly fool. Now, we place Lieutenant Lacy in the hands of the reader: it is for him to decide on the future character of the client of the "Old House," when we state an equal instance of his forbearance. For be it known, that as the Lieutenant prepared to depart, looking death at his attorney, Mr. Cat, with an improved smile, with both hands in his pockets, the tails of his coat accidentally hanging over his arms, and his head unusually advanced, approached the Lieutenant, and again grinning "Perhaps to-morrow," turned his back upon the officer. It was a critical moment for the tempted Lacy; for if ever, in her

immortal life, Venus, without speaking, cried "Kiss," Cat, by his smiling look, and the dexterity with which he took the most tantalizing position, cried "Kick."

A maiden gazing at the full moon is a beautiful object; an astronomer surveying its valleys, plains, and mountains, challenges our admiration and respect; an Indian trembling at an eclipse, beating his tambour and yelling, to scare the dragon from swallowing the planet, calls up our pity at his darkness; a magician writing his riddles on the moon's bright face, carries us into the boundless realms of imagination,—but each and all of these, in the various emotions which they feel and excite, are, in our opinion, powerless, compared to the sensations glowing, swelling in the bosom of Lieutenant Lacy, as he surveyed the presented disc of Anthony Cat, lawyer—as he looked on the broad stone of honour of "the Old House in the City." Happy are we to say, we know nothing of anatomy, and seek not to know; for were we acquainted with the minute, the delicate machinery with which we are intrusted, could we enjoy, as in our present ignorance, our dinner and plurality of bottles? No;—wearing, as we should, our eyes in our bellies, we should shudder at the despotism which we daily exercise over a thousand tender subjects, with whose names and duties we are now unacquainted; and trembling at the cruel taskmaster appetite, we should confidently predict intestine revolution—dissolution. It is thus that their deep knowledge makes all the faculty temperate as cameleons; no true physician, no real surgeon, cares for his meals—empirics may gormandize, but science rarely dines. However, this much anatomical knowledge we have arrived at, from the deportment of the Lieutenant in the hour of his temptation,—we think there can be no muscle from the heart to the toe, or fearful we are that the Lieutenant's toe had gone up. The invitation on the part of Mr. Anthony Cat was so unequivocal, that how Lacy, as a man of common courtesy, rejected it, he can best explain—we cannot. The Lieutenant descended the staircase, Mr. Cat

returned to his seat with a look of disappointment, and the senior clerk vanished to his desk, baulked of what at first promised to be a very pretty assault.

Lieutenant Lacy was a man of the highest courage; a ship's crew had presented him with a sword for his signal bravery, in an awkward affair of "cutting out." He merited to the full so flattering a testimonial of his active gallantry; but how much greater the recompense due to him for the passive magnanimity we have recorded! In such a case, and with such provocation, not to kick appears to us the grandest triumph of human equanimity. Cat himself was astounded at the moral elevation, which, however, brought its reward. Ziska's skin, specially bequeathed by the wearer to cover a drum, though no doubt capable of the loudest and most terrible sounds, was, we are certain, thin, and weak as goldbeater's, compared to our Cat's skin, sounding a charge of assault at Westminster. Convinced we are that several eminent persons might, at their deaths, for ever silence the fame of the aforesaid drum, would they but leave for a similar instrument, that which by good kicking hath been so admirably prepared on the living animal. To proceed with our history. An unforeseen and critical event increased the disappointment of the Lieutenant. Arrived at his lodgings, he found a letter from Portsmouth, calling for his instant return to his vessel, the ship being under sailing orders. The papers must be obtained from Messrs. Cat and Condor at any sacrifice; he must dispose of the reversion of a trifling freehold, inherited by his wife on the death of her mother. He had debts to pay, butchers, bakers, schoolmasters to satisfy, and money must be had. With this deep conviction, Lieutenant Lacy addressed himself to a solicitor, who promised an instantaneous recovery of the documents from "the Old House." For the client, he knew not what to make of the procrastination of Mr. Cat, who, three weeks before, on almost the first glance at the papers, declared them to be immediately convertible; money might be had upon them, ay, by noon the

next day. Nothing was more easy; the Lieutenant might depend upon the cash. From that time, however, until the final interview, there was some new, some unexpected difficulty —always, it is true, explained away by the zealous Cat, who always cried "to-morrow," and always smiled with increasing complacency.

Lieutenant Lacy was seated in the front parlour of Number ——, St. ——'s Court. His daughter Elizabeth, making the most of the light of a June evening as it sickened through the windows, was employed on a crayon portrait of her father, a dear memorial for hearts at home, when he was "far amid the melancholy main." Elizabeth had heard of the hasty summons, and worked in silence. The sailor never shewed greater heroism than at that hour. His heart was heaving for his wife and children,—he was about to quit them, perhaps for ever—to leave the beautiful creature before him intrusted to a tempting world; and yet, with these thoughts piercing his brain, he kept a smile upon his face for the gentle artist. Lieutenant Lacy had looked with unblenched gaze on the guns of an approaching enemy; but in that dreadful pause of life he shewed less noble self-control, than when, with a mind racked by household wants, he looked with a smile into his daughter's eyes. Great are the battles gained on field and deck, but greater far the triumphs won by the struggling spirit at the desolate fireside.

Father and daughter were thus employed, when a knock at the door proclaimed a new arrival. The circumstance, commonplace as it was, afforded a relief to Elizabeth, who longed, but knew not how, to break the silence.

"It is not mamma," she said; "she will not be at home this hour."

The landlady briefly informed Lieutenant Lacy, that a gentleman wished to speak to him. The Lieutenant quitted the apartment, but in two minutes returned, followed by his visitor, who, beholding Elizabeth, seemed struck with amazement.

"I will but retire to my room, and then be with you immediately," said the Lieutenant to the stranger, in a tone partaking as much of a request as of a simple intimation.

"At your leisure, Captain—I beg pardon, Lieutenant Lacy," replied the gentleman, venturing a second look at Elizabeth, who was about to follow her father, when a glance from him told her to remain.

"Most happy, Miss Lacy, at the unexpected delight of this second meeting; most happy, indeed, upon my honour."

Yes, reader, the visitor was no other than Charles Bars, the saunterer from the Temple Gardens.

"Really? — What! your father?" exclaimed the young gentleman, with the most enviable confidence; and he took the drawing from the table, and stared at it very like a patron of the fine arts. Humph! Indeed, a fine looking man. Well, never mind, matters must blow over: and depend upon it, Miss Lucy, your papa will be a post-captain." Had Charles Bars been first Lord of the Admiralty, he could not have taken a higher tone of prophecy. "But really, Miss Lacy, it 's hard your papa must leave his family; is there no way of keeping him?"

"I fear, Sir, none; he must almost immediately set off for the fleet."

"No, no;" cried Charles Bars, "not so bad as that—not immediately. I feel I can on my own responsibility allow the Lieutenant some further time; indeed, I came with the best intentions."

It was clear to Elizabeth, that the visitor was some functionary of the Admiralty; his confident tone betrayed his power and importance.

"Do you indeed, Sir?" said the girl, forgetful of even the face of Charles Bars under her bonnet; you will make my mamma so happy; we must all thank you."

"Not at all, Miss Lacy; for my part, if you, desire it, your father shan't budge — anything to please you, my dear Miss

Lacy;" and with every word he spoke, Mr. Charles L approached a step nearer to Elizabeth: and when he utt the last syllable, his audacious arm surrounded her waist.

Lieutenant Lacy was a man of marked decision; and ente the room at this instant, without one word of breath or war given. Charles Bars, by some extraordinary process, was fl with his head under the fire-grate, his neck uncomfort supported by the edge of an iron fender. There he lay, lying, bled like Cæsar. We, however, have one excuse for wounded. It was his firm conviction that Lieutenant L had quitted the house by some back door, or by scaling roof, and descending a neighbouring chimney. But, wh may be asked, should the Lieutenant shun an interview the visitor? Why treat with such contumely the son o officer? The truth is, when we spoke of the professio Charles Bars' father, we forgot to state his precise ser Be it known, then, that he was neither military officer, naval officer, but officer to the sheriff! And Charles him though young, enjoyed no less a dignity, in support of w he had that evening visited Lieutenant Lacy at the sui Messrs. Cat and Condor, for services *not* rendered. The strate legalist, calculating that the courage of his assail "preyed not upon carcasses," lay motionless as Bracton; he proved that his lungs were of corresponding brass with face, and he roared, "Bob Sykes!" who, listening in street, loudly responded to the call with the brass of the str door knocker. The landlady, with feminine quickness, jum at right conclusions, and admitted the clamorous gentle without, who rushed into the parlour, and, blind to the b of his companion in the pursuit of his duty, cried, "Whe the Leaftenant?" Where, indeed? All we know of his esc is this:—The landlady, ere she admitted Robert Sykes, a strength proceeding from the hatred of her visitors, fa clawed the gallant seaman from the parlour, and carried off ere he himself was aware of the abduction. Where

woman hid her victim we know not. In what household fastness, in what domestic crypt the Lieutenant lay shut up from the searching kindness of Robert Sykes, remains to this day undivulged. The Lieutenant himself would never confess it.

"A pretty business this, marm; suppose he had killed the man?" asked Bob Sykes of Mrs. Smith, when, having given up the search for the Lieutenant, he had time to sympathise with the maltreated—"Suppose he had killed the man?" again he asked; and again Mrs. Smith rubbed her hands, and gave one of her quiet looks.

If we know ourselves, we are made up of gentleness and mercy; we would no more kill an officer of the sheriff than we would tread on a poor beetle. But as human nature at the best is weak, and as the Father of Evil, indefatigable in his business, ever watches about the meekest and the purest, should we ever be betrayed into the indiscretion of slaying a sheriff's officer—should we ever be guilty of the absurd weakness—our only hope is, that we may be tried for the peccadillo by a jury of matrons. If there be only one Mrs. Smith among the dozen, the serenity with which we shall appear in the prisoners' dock will, as Mr. Pepys would say, "be pretty to see."

The blood from the nose of Charles Bars continued to meander down the finest shirt and the gayest waistcoat of his multitudinous wardrobe. The truth is, his father "held that night a solemn supper," where all the world was invited. We speak advisedly, for among the guests there were many veteran officers and their families, half-a-dozen bill-brokers, and a sprinkling of hard-working attorneys, particular friends of the hospitable host. Charles Bars had risen from the hands of the hair-dresser, and, aided by his sister Constantia, was about to rehearse, at their grand piano-forte,

"Together let us range the fields,"

he proposing to challenge Miss Solomons to the performance of that duet in the course of the evening, when he was sum-

moned by his father to execute a writ on Lieutenant Lacy. Charles was the model of filial obedience, and Messrs. Cat and Condor were excellent customers. However, we have already detailed the difficulties of Charles in the pursuit of his duty. Giving the writ to Sykes, he now quitted the house, and, entering a hackney-coach, drove homewards, speculating by the way on the amount of damages. Lieutenant Lacy emerged from his mysterious hiding-place, and immediately set off for the private house of his new solicitor. He was within sight of the door, when somebody calling his name, he turned round and felt a paralyzing hand on his right shoulder. "Lieutenant Lacy, you must come with me." The speaker was no other than the discerning and ubiquitous Bob Sykes, who, by a lamp, had caught a glimpse of the Lieutenant's features as he rapidly passed him. True it is, Bob had never before beheld his prisoner; but with restless observation he had scrutinized the drawing at the Lieutenant's lodgings, and the readiness with which he therefrom recognised the original was a high compliment to the powers of the artist. Nothing now remained but to enter into a new negotiation with the partners of "the Old House," who consented to withdraw their action, avowing themselves ready to take their bills from the proceeds of the sale of the Lieutenant's property—a sale which they now hoped immediately to effect. They had never wished to distress the Lieutenant — not they; but he had been so unadvised, so very impatient. Lacy even apologised to Messrs. Cat and Condor far his hasty misinterpretation of their motives. But time pressed; he must immediately have the money—in two days the fleet sailed—he had that morning seen the news in the papers, and so, in truth, had Messrs. Cat and Condor; and knowing, as they did, that the subsistence, nay, the very reputation, of their client depended upon joining his ship—knowing, in fact, that he had not an hour to spare — they wished, at any sacrifice, to effect a sale.

"In the evening, Lieutenant Lacy, I have no doubt, we may sign and seal."

"Evening, Sir!" exclaimed Lacy, franticly dashing his fist upon the desk. "In an hour, Mr. Cat, in an hour, or I am a lost man!"

And he sunk again into his chair, and a tear burned in his eye.

"Be composed, my dear Sir, pray be composed," cried Cat, looking himself the spirit of tranquillity. "As the gentleman, who we believe is desirous of purchasing the cottage, is our client, we will immediately send to him. Edward, here! No; wait until I write, and take this note to Mr. Fortescue, and be sure and bring an answer."

The junior clerk vanished with the missive, and Mr. Cat proceeded to mend his goose-quill. The operation finished, he politely handed the newspaper to Lacy, who, after a vain endeavour to read it, arose, and, with vacant looks, gazed out of the window. He was, however, shortly called to a recollection of things by the sharp whistling of a man below, who sauntered backwards and forwards, evidently as if waiting for somebody. Lacy thought he recognised the gait, the costume of the loiterer. Yes, he was not mistaken; the whistler was Bob Sykes. For whom, for what could he be waiting? Edward, the junior clerk, was fleet as a greyhound; and Mr. Fortescue being luckily at home, in a few minutes personally answered the letter from the "Old House."

"Mr. Fortescue is come, Sir," said Edward.

And Mr. Cat, with a slight bow to the Lieutenant, quitted the office, we presume to settle preliminaries with the visitor. After a short absence he returned, ushering in Mr. Fortescue. He was, in reality, a man of about two-and-thirty; but we suppose it was either the smoke of his fireplace, or a continual cast of thought, which gave to his features, in themselves not regularly handsome, the aspect of eight-and-forty. Mr. Fortescue had been a party to many of the "financial operations" of the "Old House," and thus must have possessed considerable wealth. Indeed, the fact was roundly asserted by

Messrs. Cat and Condor, who would facetiously (we know not with which of the partners originated the joke) call him their golden calf. In sober truth, they had talked so much of his wealth, that the poor man passed for an incorrigible miser; and neither his dwelling nor his garments were calculated to falsify the opinion. Indeed, what can be said of a man who dwells in the top apartment of a magazine for old bottles, old rags, old iron, at the bottom of Saffron Hill, and yet bargains for and purchases twenty houses in the year—beautiful mansions, rich acres, parks, woods, fisheries? What can be urged in defence of him who, by his dealings, we should judge capable of wearing each day a new suit of gold cloth, whose whole wardrobe, were he turned out from it clean as Adam, would be no good pennyworth at fifteen shillings? The case was plain: Mr. Fortescue was a muckworm; yet, with all the paralyzing passions of a miser, he had retained the lively sense of benefits received. He was bound by a feeling of gratitude, heart and soul, to Messrs. Cat and Condor, who, in a most difficult law case, in a cause which periled the whole of his worldly property, had, with their proverbial sagacity, effected his triumph. Lieutenant Lacy started when introduced to Mr. Fortescue. The appearance of the stranger was not prepossessing: harsh, dark features, completely mapped by the small-pox,—a large, black, cowering eye, and a mouth wide and rigid, as though modelled by a horse-shoe, rarely appeal with success to the confidence of the superficial; and Lieutenant Lacy, though a worthy man, we do not set up for a sage. A faded green coat, with honest copper buttons, the deceptive gilding having long since disappeared, a blue plush waistcoat, brown breeches, boots with clay-coloured tops, a hat of the like hue, verdantly turned up, and a cotton neckerchief, pattern white ground, with a small dark blue lozenge, composed all the visible obligations of Mr. Fortescue to the sophistications of dress. The business was soon commenced: and luckily Mr. Fortescue was a man of few words: we say luckily,

for his voice was not one of those living harmonies the ear loves to dwell upon, at least it was not on the present occasion, but perhaps Mr. Fortescue had a cold.

"Mr. Fortescue is prepared to give one hundred and fifty pounds for the cottage."

"One hundred and fifty!" cried Lieutenant Lacy. "Three hundred, Mr. Cat—three hundred was the sum."

"You asked? Yes, Lieutenant, I remember, and in other times worth the money, nay, I think now, cheap at the amount; but Mr. Fortescue *has said* a hundred and fifty."

We must account for a peculiar emphasis on Mr. Fortescue *has said*. Briefly, then, Mr. Cat always eulogised his rich client for one stern virtue in dealing, he never rose or fell in his first offer. He was a man to die a martyr to his first *dixi*.

"But surely, Mr. Cat, Mr. Fortescue is not aware of the extent of the property, of the natural advantages——"

"Fully aware, my dear Lieutenant. I have shewn him the plan, taken by our Plymouth agent; he is fully possessed of every thing, and he is ready to put down for the purchase" —and here Mr. Cat met the eye of Mr. Fortescue, who looked upon the ground, and turned away his head with an air of indifference, and said very gruffly,

"One hundred and fifty."

"Never! nothing shall force me to the sacrifice," exclaimed the Lieutenant. "Nothing! A hundred and fifty for——"

He seized his hat, and was about to rush from the room, when the shrill whistling of Bob Sykes below, like the voice of the snake-charmer, fixed him motionless. The sweat broke in beads upon his forehead, his eyes glowed, and a hectic flush came to his cheek, as he said in a tone, almost tremulous with entreaty, "Say two hundred."

Mr. Cat said nothing, but threw open the palms of his hands, and looked at Mr. Fortescue, who remained dumb.

"Say two hundred," repeated the Lieutenant.

"Mr. Fortescue?" cried Cat, awaiting his answer, "Mr. Fortescue?"

Mr. Fortescue again averted his face, and, as it appeared, with a slight convulsive elevation of the shoulders, again replied, "One hundred and fifty."

"It will not suffice, Sir, it will not suffice," cried Lacy; and then in a lower tone, deepening as he proceeded, "I have engagements to meet, debts of a most pressing, delicate nature to discharge, children who——Mr. Cat, you promised three hundred!"

"Very true, Lieutenant, and I still think the house a bargain at the money; and, moreover, I have no doubt, since Mr. Fortescue will make no advance, but in a day or two another purchaser——"

"A day or two? You know, Sir, I must quit London to-night. To-morrow I must be on board my ship, or I am a ruined, a dishonoured man. Mr. Fortescue!" cried Lacy, in a tone that seemed to pierce the spinal marrow of the purchaser, for again his shoulders leapt at the sound, but his head was turned away, and he replied no syllable. There was a dead pause in the sanctum of the "Old House;" the Lieutenant looked livid with repressed agitation; Mr. Cat gently rubbed his hands, and looked over his spectacles; Condor raised his eyes from his book, and again passed his tongue round his upper lip, and Mr. Fortescue rocked to and fro, his head sunk on his bosom. Then Lacy, gazing wildly about him, his eye fell on the newspaper, and the line, "Naval intelligence," struck on his brain like fire. Falling in a chair, he cried, or rather groaned, "give me the money." The deeds were signed, the hundred and fifty pounds paid, and then Mr. Fortescue immediately departed. The original bill of Messrs. Cat and Condor, for negotiating the purchase, was forty pounds, to which must be added the expense of the arrest, which they so deeply regretted. These demands were of course discharged by the Lieutenant, who had then but little more than a hundred

pounds to provide for claims to twice that amount. Puzzled how to make one guinea perform the duty of two (in this tragic comedy of the world, a most frequent but no less difficult double), Lacy prepared to return to his lodgings. "Tarry a little, Lieutenant, the law hath yet another hold on thee." It is enacted in too scrupulous England, that a man shall not, even in the way of relaxation, break the nose of a sheriff's officer gratis. Now Charles Bars had admirable ground of action; the family surgeon could conscientiously testify to the battered condition of the nose of his patient by violent contact with the knuckles of the sea lieutenant. No time was lost to inform the assailant of his delicate predicament; still it was insinuated that Christian charity was not extinct in the family of the Bars; a compromise of sufficient weight might be received. Now Lieutenant Lacy recollecting a wise axiom of warriors, that to get rid of a troublesome enemy, it is lawful to build for him a bridge of gold, applied a principle of the field to remove a civil difficulty, and thus relieved himself of the broken nose of Charles Bars, by a sacrifice of ten guineas; in proper phrase, by building for him a bridge of gold.

Ten guineas for the single nose of a sheriff's officer! If so small a portion of the sheriff's face divine be so costly, what must be the value of the whole animal? Little knew an excellent friend of ours, whose whole heart was cream and honey, what magnificent sport he was preparing for the world, when he gave it as his firm conviction, that once a-year every honest man, duly equipped for shooting, should be permitted unrestricted sport in and within the vicinity of Chancery Lane! Of what worth would be a single head of game, when it is seen that the market price of one nose is ten guineas! But then, on this expensive scale, what an opportunity would be afforded to the rich to display their wealth! Thus, no banquet, however luxuriously composed, would be deemed complete, unless instead of being invited to partake of pheasant, teal, or woodcock, a carver could observe, "permit me,

Sir, the happiness of helping you to a little sheriff's officer." Of course at first the invitation might create a start, a tremor among many guests; but the luxury would soon be understood, and as a luxury, highly relished. Our gross ancestors served up the boar, the swan, nay, the porpoise. Let us prove our advancement in civilised and rational life, by dishing sheriffs' officers. However, to leave the delicacies of the table for our narrative—

Lieutenant Lacy took a hurried farewell of his wife and children, and threw himself into the mail for Portsmouth. The sacrifice which he had been compelled to make, rendering the discharge of all claims upon him wholly impossible, he could not feel secure of his liberty until far upon the road. Disappointed in certain views for the provision of her family in London, Mrs. Lacy and the children prepared to return to their native place—a village two or three miles from Plymouth—at which sea-port, twenty years before, an event occurred, which, gaining for the Lieutenant general esteem and admiration, we think had some influence on the affection of his future wife.

Lacy, at the time whereof we write, was about nineteen, a midshipman on board H.M.S. ——. The ship's crew had received long arrears of pay, and all on board was clamorous merriment and high festivity. The slopsellers in Plymouth thronged the vessel to ply their dreadful trade. The first thing a sailor buys is a watch—now Mr. Lazarus, a patriarchal slopseller, had sold some twenty chronometers among the ship's company, but by some unaccountable error of the maker or makers, one and all of the watches stopped, as by general consent, on the second day. The day after, Mr. Lazarus, attended by his son, a boy of about ten years old, came on board—no doubt as an assiduous and honest tradesman, to inquire into the merits of his various timepieces. Mr. Lazarus was between sixty and seventy—a man, uniting to the keenest views of business a singularly mild and vene-

rable outside. He would dilate on the excellences of a Guernsey frock with the winning simplicity of an antique shepherd. Touched by his tongue, trinkets of copper glistened in the eyes of the buyer virgin gold. There never was so meek, so picturesque a slopseller. Behold him with imperturbable tranquillity surrounded by a crowd of sailors, every man exhibiting a watch—some roaring, some growling, some sneering, some blaspheming—and not a few grasping the frail memorial of time, as though meditating a cast at the seller's skull. In this tempest of bad words and unequivocal glances, Mr. Lazarus was motionless and patient as the figure-head—a composure highly annoying to his customers, who began to close about him—and push him, now to the right and now to the left—now backwards and now forwards, until—— How the accident came about not one of the crew could ever tell: the venerable Mr. Lazarus was—pushed into the sea! "Man overboard!" is a cry that thrills through the heart of a ship's company; but whether in the present instance the general festivity had made men deaf to the call, or whether the cry was not sufficiently loud to be generally audible, we cannot venture to determine; but this we know, the tide running strong, was carrying away the old Jew, cumbrously and heavily clothed, and in a few seconds Plymouth would have mourned its oldest slopseller, had not a young midshipman leaped into the sea, and, being an admirable swimmer, come up with the sinking Israelite as his gray hairs were fast disappearing in the deep. Young Lacy supported the drowning wretch until a boat received them. The old man's son, who had shrieked in helpless agony as he saw him borne away, fell on his knees at the feet of the young officer, embracing his legs in speechless gratitude. All Plymouth rang with praises of the humanity of the midshipman for his wonderful philanthropy in saving even Mr. Lazarus. However, Lacy had his reward; for, as we have hinted, we doubt not he owed to the circumstance the first affection of his wife.

Arrived at Portsmouth, Lacy lost not a moment, but hastened to go on board. What was his despair to see the whole fleet under sail! It had weighed anchor an hour before; the wind was fair and freshening—to come up with his ship was impossible—he saw her—with a sailor's eyes he marked her canvass lessening as he looked. He seemed fixed, motionless with misery. Another moment, and he leapt into a waterman's boat. "Five pounds," he cried to the two men, "if I reach my ship."

"Which is she, Sir? What's her name?"

"The ——."

"Impossible, Sir—she is the fastest frigate in the navy and the breeze, you may see, is getting up—impossible."

"Make the trial, my good fellow—if I lose my ship, I am lost for ever. My family ——" Lacy could speak no more.

"What do you say, Peter?" asked the waterman of his companion.

"Say?" replied the man, looking suspiciously at the fleet and arming himself with a mouthful of pigtail—"it's impossible, you know; but, poor gentleman, we must do it."

The boat was pushed off, the sail hoisted, and the men with arms of iron plied their oars. For some time the Lieutenant sat gazing at his receding ship in silence. Every moment she gained upon them.

"Lay to it, boys, lay to it," said Lacy, despairingly.

The appeal was needless. The men toiled at the top of their strength—their faces were scarlet, and their stout oars bent and quivered like rods of steel—the boat, a taught trim craft shot like an arrow through the water—still she seemed to close upon the frigate.

"Damn her," said one of the men, casting a backward look at the vessel, and speaking in a tone of mingled disappointment and admiration, "damn her, she flies like a gull."

"The wind is getting up," said Lacy, hopelessly.

"No, Sir; if anything, going down," answered Peter, though he looked as if he knew well enough it was not so.

"They are setting studding-sails," said the Lieutenant, as though he gave up all for lost.

"The more credit for us if we beat 'em," answered the encouraging Peter.

Again Lacy was silent, though, in the waywardness of suspense, he could have talked to the boat as to a creature instinct with life and reason. Then, as he cast his eyes upon the sea, he beheld not the green fields, the vales, and groves, which a seaman struck by the calenture sickens for; but he saw mirrored in the deep, still following him and still looking on him, the face of his wife—the faces of his five children.

"My turn now," said Lacy, tearing himself from the vision, and relieving one of the men at the oar.

For another hour they pulled in almost unbroken silence. At the last, the man cried to his resting companion, "It's no use, Peter."—Lacy felt that every stroke of the forward oar became less and less and less powerful—that his ship became less and less distinct—the whole fleet looked no more than a flight of wild swans.—"It's no use, Peter," repeated the man; and he ran in his oar.

"We are gaining on them, we are gaining fast," said Lacy; "for God's sake, men, do not fail me."

"It's no use, Sir," replied the man; and the sweat ran down his very fingers.

"My good fellow!" cried Lacy imploringly to Peter.

Peter gave another look at the fleet, and then echoed his partner—"It's no use, Sir."

Lacy sprang to his feet, stretched out his arms, and, with a look of agonized madness, glared over the boat. The men, startled, rose with him. At that instant, as with a charm, the wind fell.

"Where's the wind?" said Peter, as the sail fell to the mast.

"A dead calm," cried his wondering companion.

"Come you aft," said Peter, and he again seized the oar—

"Now, Sir," cried he, "the blessing of God, and a long stroke, and we board her."

Again Lacy and Peter bent to it—the oars rang in the rowlocks, and the water boiled as the craft shot through it. It was a long, a hard pull; but Lacy stood on the deck of his own ship.

His brother officers crowded about him with congratulations, and even the captain, strict disciplinarian as he was, hardly repressed a smile as he said, "Better late than never, Mr. Lacy."

In the solitude of his cabin, reviewing the hurried events of the past few days, Lacy remembered, and drew from his pocket an unopened letter. It had been delivered to him as he was about to get upon the mail. Fearing it contained no pleasing communication, he cared not to break the seal. He now opened the letter, and found it enclosed two hundred pounds in bank-notes. Bewildered by the treasure, and still more rapt as he proceeded, he read as follows:—

"Sir,—It was some comfort to me, in the bitterness of this morning, to find you did not know me. Twenty times I could have fallen at your feet, and begged you to trample upon me. O Sir, I saw it all again—I saw the old man gasping in the sea—I saw your blessed hand pluck him back to life. If ever my eyes beheld my old father, they saw him in that office—there where I was brought to cheat, to rob you. Never before did I feel what it was to be a scoundrel. At the first glance I knew you, and I felt as if I had swallowed burning coals. The money I send you will make up the fair value of the house. For your compassion of an old man in the hour of peril, may the God of Israel for ever bless you!

"David Lazarus, *alias* Fortescue.

"P.S. Any attempt to discover where I am will be useless. I shall free myself from the bondage in which you saw me, and leave England for some place where I shall be unknown. God bless you, dear Sir."

It was even so—Mr. Fortescue was no other than the tool of Messrs. Cat and Condor, the poor nominal purchaser of all their bargains. "But," says the reader, "you spoke of a law-suit, in which all the property of Fortescue had been preserved by the partners of the 'Old House.'" Very true, for his only property was his neck. He had been brought through a very ugly business by Cat and Condor, who afterwards secured him for their own mercantile purposes. He had, however, by some means saved three hundred pounds, with which he contemplated speculations on his own account, when his meeting with the preserver of his father's life, a victim to a conspiracy in which he himself played a most odious character, struck upon his heart, and made it flow with gratitude. The miserable wretch, scurfed as he was with his daily villanies, at one touch of nature shook off his moral leprosy, and stood a healthful man. With his one hundred pounds he went abroad, and lived and died a flourishing and wealthy citizen. For once Mr. Charles Bars might claim the reputation of a prophet; for in a few months the fleet returned to Portsmouth, and in two days afterwards a communication from the Admiralty greeted Lacy commander. But what of Messrs. Cat and Condor? what of the partners of the "Old House?" On an eventful feast, in the fourth plate of turtle, Condor went off in an apoplexy. His fortune, inherited by a profligate nephew, passed in two years into the hands of blacklegs. For Cat, he became a bigoted believer in supernatural signs and tokens. He sank to mere imbecility, and may now be seen in a certain asylum, pacing the court-yard, vacantly smiling, rubbing his hands, and crying every minute, "To-morrow, Sir, to-morrow!"

THE BIRTH-DAY OF PUCK.

When Puck was born—*when* first the earth
Was gladden'd with his antic mirth;
And fairy crowds, with louder note
Than ever swell'd the throstle's throat,
Did, chuckling, greet the quirks and quips,
That flew like sparks from Robin's lips;—
When first the thrifty maid did view
The fairy penny in her shoe;
And idle slut did first bewail
Our Robin's thumb and finger nail;—
When first the drunk, benighted clown
By wanton Puck was tumbled down
In noisome pool or sedgy flood,
To plunge or snore in weeds and mud;—
In sooth, we know not, tho' the day
We've sought in ages far away;
Have seized the beard of father Time
To make him deck our slipshod rhyme,
With ev'ry *when* and ev'ry *why*
Of that great *Anno Domini!*
In vain; churl Time will not confess
But gives us his best leave to—guess.

'Tis said, that Robin's life began
With laughter in the heart of man;
So old, some say that Adam's brain
Had inkling of the impish swain;

That e'en in Eden's balmy groves,
The first abode of human loves,
That human fancy—(when the skies
Were glitt'ring as with angel's eyes,
With light more conscious, more intense
With love tow'rds human innocence,
Than travels from those shadow'd spheres
To this old world of guile and tears)—
That fancy *then* beheld the sprite,
And heard him in the od'rous night;
A thing of shadows, yet as true
As eagle's wing, or lion's thew:
A sound as from the land of dreams,
Yet audible as running streams!
For ever since the world began,
Did Fancy, God's high gift to man,
Behold a substance, vision-wrought,
And list the melody of thought.
Thus Adam—when his cunning word
Had named each earthly thing that stirr'd—
Might see and hear in Eden's round,
A shape unnamed, an unknown sound,—
Something fantastical, yet rife
With spiritual looks and life;
Extravagant to mortal sense,
Yet part of heaven's intelligence!
Thus, wand'ring from the birth of Time,
From land to land, from clime to clime,
Our sprite may still have been the same,
Tho' trav'lling still have changed his name.
At length he dwells in Britain's isle,
And British maidens sweeter smile
To name the tricks, the cheats, the luck
Of Robin Hood—Rob—Pug—or Puck!
Dwells, did we sing? Oh, no! 'tis said
That Puck hath half an age been dead;

That Mammon, demon of the day,
Hath ta'en his gladsome breath away;
His corpse in ledger leaves did fold,
And ring his knell with coined gold.
Approach his epitaph, and see
"*Puck murder'd by Utility!*"
O no! trust not the canting tale
Till human aspirations fail.
What tho' the peasant pause to hear
The Rail-god in his fierce career;
What tho' the raging creature seem
An iron fiend with pulse of steam,—
A presence, 'fore whose sudden might
All fairy folk hath taken flight;
A minister of Wisdom, sent
For Superstition's punishment;
To banish from the woods and vales
The old, old sprites of songs and tales
Rehearsed by our believing sires
At harvest-home—at winter fires;
And proved how vain such follies be
To speak the truths of L. S. D!—
Ah no! still fancy holds her reign
While throbs the heart, or thinks the brain;
Still working her auspicious spells,
She peoples streams, and glades, and dells,
And as she strikes her golden strings,
Still fairies dance in grassy rings!
Thus, spite of Mammon's angry look,
The schoolmaster and spelling-book,—
Despite the says of later seers,—
Philosophers and engineers,—
Believe that Puck from death is freed,
And battle for the good old creed.
Believe that on a first of May,
Which Robin *will'd* his natal-day,

He invitations writ and sent
To ev'ry isle and continent,
Where dwelt a Fay, a Troll, a Sprite,
A Nis, an Elfin Brown or White:
In brief, to all the million things
That haunt the woods, the hills, and springs;
That work within the jewell'd mine,
Or gambol in the ocean brine,
To one and all our Robin wrote
A very graceful, pressing note,
On wing of living butterfly,
In fragrant ink of vi'let's dye;
When, lo! on primrose pinions flew
A very cloud of billets-doux!
And trav'lling thro' the waste of air
Their task perform'd with fairy care.
To such who dwelt in flood and brook,
Some wingéd fish the missive took.
Enough; that all the realm of Fay
Would grace our Robin's blithe May-day;
Would kindly condescend to steal
From brighter homes, to take a meal
Beneath a pallid English moon
To English cricket's drowsy tune.
'Twas hard to brave the foggy mist,
But Puck did so entreat—insist!
May-morning 's come! The abbey bell
Hath sounded fickle April's knell!
May-morning 's come; and with the hour
A richer bloom is in the flow'r;
The velvet sward glows brighter green,
The moon's array'd in brighter sheen;
Sweets sudden freight the zephyr's wing,
And fairer, sweeter ev'ry thing;
As tho' the heart of mother earth
Did gush with love at May-morn's birth!

The guests are met in Druid wood,
The early home of Robin Hood;
Who knew each storm-defying oak,
When its first leaf from acorn broke.
The banquet 'neath a tree is laid,
Whose arms, in burning noon would shade
A very host of chivalry
In all their pomp and panoply.
The leaves that on the tree did grow
Outnumber'd were by guests below.
Some hither journey'd on the back
Of trav'ller swallow, fairy's hack!
Some, changed to downy feathers, find
An easy passage on the wind;
And some o'er peak and ocean brush,
Well-mounted on a safe bulrush:
While they who look'd t'wards Scotland, saw
The brownie horsed on oaten straw.
Some riding bees,—some driving gnats,—
Some reining flies,—some loading bats!
We cannot time nor space engage
To give each fairy equipage,
(Tho' each of all the million host
Was printed in "The Glowworm Post.")
Enough; the guests are met; and lo!
Didst e'er behold so rare a show?
The mushroom tables fairly sink
Beneath the weight of meat and drink.
Nor ortolans, nor frogs are there,
But solid, hearty English fare.
The sirloin, food for giant strength,
And ribs of beef, an inch in length!
Divine to taste; and to the sight
Like tulips veined with red and white:
From Robin's creamy oxen cut;
The breed he stole from Lilliput;

But fed on British roots and grass,
Soon wax'd to such prodigious pass,
That scarce the dock-leaf could supply
Them shelter from the burning sky;
Nor e'en the daisy rear its head
Beneath their desolating tread.
Thus vast the beef! And oh, to see
Th' effect of all its witchery!
How eyeballs glared—how quiver'd jaws—
How roar'd and peel'd the mad applause,—
And how to give their hearts relief,
With one acclaim, all cried—"Beef! Beef!"
Each humpback Troll with parrot nose
Did smell the joint as 'twere a rose;
And snuffing still, the nose did seem
To shoot and grow towards the steam:
But when the gravy bless'd his sight,
His back shot higher with delight!
  Another dish now lures the eye,
And wakens curiosity.
In shape a sphere,—in colour brown,
With streams of amber trickling down:
"What can it be?" exclaims a guest;
"It is—it is the Phœnix nest!"
"'Tis Araby itself!" one cries;
"Arabia all in smallest size!"
Then begg'd to know what 'twas that sent
Such odours thro' the firmament?
When Robin, touch'd with native pride,
"Plum-pudding!" like a Briton cried.
"Plum-pudding!" sounds o'er vale and hill—
"Plum-pudding!" Echo answers still.
  A lady Nis, with longing fears,
And eyes dissolving into tears,
Survey'd askance the wond'rous cate,
Then caught a fragment in her plate:

But scarcely swallow'd, ere the Nis
Fell swooning with excess of bliss!
This accident a moment stay'd
The mirth, and worse, the cheer delay'd.
A cry, a crowd, and then a smell
Of hartshorn drops, and all was well!
Yet many ask'd, as greatest boon,
To know what made the lady swoon;
What 'gredients mix'd by fairy wit
Had caused that interesting fit?
Whereon our Puck, with learned vein
Began a most exotic strain.
With guileful art wove thought with thought,
And talking long, said less than nought.
Now glanced at raisins, now did steal
A dubious hint from lemon-peel:
And now, with most scholastic face,
Pronounced the praise of cloves and mace:
Thought nutmeg singularly nice,
And ginger worth a golden price;
Would say thus much while on his legs,
That crumbs of bread and new-laid eggs,
With currants, and—above them all—
That liquor which men brandy call,—
If mingled with a cunning touch
Would make the dish they praised so much!
Thus Puck: and all rejoiced to see
Plum-pudding's art and mystery.
Deluded Fays! by Puck amused,
Who charming ears, the thought abused;
Who using words with high pretence,
Employs them but to blindfold sense;
For Puck was aye a patriot elf,
So kept his pudding to himself!
Another dish—there were but three—
Electrified the company!

Some call'd it cake—some hinted meat,
Dissolved by aromatic heat:
Some vow'd that aught so richly nice
Was made of flow'rs from Paradise.
Puck let them guess with laughing eye—
Then named the dish, and said—"Mince Pie!"
And "Mince Pie" echo'd thro' the sky!
Next Puck proclaim'd with gracious air,—
"My friends, fall too—you see your fare!"
E'en at the word a blaze of light
Did swallow up the ling'ring night:
The linnet warbled from the spray
A welcome to the sudden day:
Mounted the lark from green-ear'd corn
To celebrate the rising morn;
Such instant brilliant light was made
When ev'ry fairy drew his blade,—
A weapon wrought of northern steel
To carve and cut a fairy meal;
Of such surpassing temper tried,
'Twould e'en prismatic rays divide.
Sirloins are slit in threads as fine
As make the spider's filmy line;
And pies and puddings vanish too
Like morning drops of sun-kiss'd dew:
While elfin abdomens become
As round and tense as Hector's drum.
Such prowess of the appetite
Some goodly bev'rage should requite.
Thus thought the guests, and straight behold
Aloft a million cups of gold!
Not gold; no, 'tis the liquor's hue
That crystal goblets sparkles through.
A million yellow lamps are seen
Reflecting on the tender green.

Some vow'd 't was oranges that shone
Among the branches' deeper tone:
When quick, at Robin Hood's command,
A cup descends to each right hand.
"'T is drink," cries one; another, "No!
It is the sun's departing glow!"
One cries, "'T is like to Venus' hair:"
The ladies vow 't is twice as fair.
"Within the bright and potent flood,"
Cries one, "I spy the dragon's blood."
When Robin, lolling at his ease,
Declared, "My friends, 't is all of these.
It has the golden sunset's tint,
Of Venus' boy has something in 't;
And where Saint George the dragon slew,
There first the mighty barley grew!
Drink, gentles, drink—your hearts regale
WITH PUDDING—BEEF—MINCE-PIES—AND ALE!"

The goblet drain'd, with quicken'd zest
Again fell to each fairy guest.
So magical the feast, some say
They banquet to this very day!

BARON VON BOOTS:

A TALE OF "BLOOD."

CHAPTER I.

Baron Valhallah Von Boots was descended from the Sea Kings! One colonel of Black Hussars, who, in an incautious moment, had smiled a doubt of the glorifying fact, sleeps beneath Silesian turf, sent thither by the Baron's sword; and a French captain of dragoons coughing, as the Baron supposed, sarcastically at a Scandinavian ancestor of the first century, was incurably maimed in the left arm by the sabre of Von Boots! The wounded man is now alive in Paris, and ready to depose in his person to the sensitiveness and skilful valour of the Baron, above all men fiercely proud of the inestimable treasures inherited of an ancient and illustrious race. "I have no gold," the Baron would exclaim, smiling, as it appeared, the very deepest satisfaction at his condition, "I have no gold, but—" and here the Baron would fling up one hand to the heavens, and, with the other, remove his hat, should it be there, from his capacious forehead; and as though gazing on his grandfathers' grandfather's tippling mead in the halls of Odin, would add, in a tone of thunder, "but—but I have de blood!"

High blood, like the finest wine, may be kept so long that it shall entirely lose its flavour; and though it may obtain an affectation of respect for its antiquity, yet circumstances may combine to make men turn from it, allowing it to be very "curious," but selecting that of a less illustrious quality. Hence, the last man of an old family may be like the last bottle of a famous vintage—a thing to talk of, not to use. We remember an illustration.

"You talk of old wine, gentlemen," cried Mr. Dovesheai a bankruptcy attorney, to a select circle—we were about write knot—of professional friends; "why, upon my life, a as I 'm a Christian, I have in my cellar port wine a hundr and seventeen years old!"—"Is it possible? —"Mind, it only one bottle, the last bottle. Here, John, bring up th wine, bring it up: and now gentlemen, since you talk of ol wine, you shall have a *bonne bouche*. —"My dear Doveshear you wouldn't drink it?"—"Why not? why not "—"Quit gone with age," observes Costs, confidentially, to his neighbou Pinch, who replies, "Worse than physic, of course. —"D— if I spoil *my* mouth with it," whispers the conscientious Gorge whilst others of the party, saying nothing, only endeavour no to make wry mouths.—"Here it is!" cries the hospitabl Dovesheart; "the corkscrew, John"—"The corkscrew! exclaims Flay, "surely, surely, you 'll never draw it: thousand pities—such a curious thing!"—"Pooh! pooh! answers Dovesheart "it must be drunk some day, and, o an occasion like this, why, there 'll just be a taste a piec and——"—"No, no; really your kindness goes too far," say Rubygill; "consider, one hundred and seventeen years old —so rare a thing!—don't draw it for us. I 'm sure, n gentleman here requires——" and Rubygill looks around him and every guest cries, "No, no,"—shocked at the very proposa of the sacrifice. A length, amidst words and looks of entreat Dovesheart lays down the corkscrew; a burst of applaus attending the merciful act. "Well, it 's very odd!" says th host, shaking his head at the ancient port, "very strange— but, to tell you the truth—I have had that bottle up at least dozen times, and just, as now, nobody would ever suffer me t draw the cork. John, take the bottle to the cellar."

Baron Von Boots was the last bottle of his race: many an many a time had he found his way up to the drawing-room— had been praised as a person of most ancient stock—had hear the highest eulogies of his name—had been gazed at, smile

upon, by the brightest eyes; and yet, yet was the Baron the last bachelor of his line, the sole remaining bottle of the vintage of Von Boots! However, even doomed to the dark and comfortless bin of celibacy, the Baron had his consolation—"I have not de money," he would always cry, "but I have de blood."—"Not a soul will give twopence halfpenny for me——nay, will even wet his lips with me," cries Dovesheart's port—"but, hurrah! I am a hundred and seventeen years old!"

The Baron Von Boots had, in happy season, entered the family circle of the Neatskins. The true friend is tried by affliction: Philip Neatskin was in sorrow, and Von Boots proved himself a friend indeed. Death was gradually withdrawing Mrs. Neatskin, that best of women—as her husband vehemently called her—from a vain and wicked world, when the Baron stept in to support the good man beneath the shock, which, truth to say, he had long awaited with commendable philosophy: sustained and strengthened by the Baron, Neatskin deemed himself invulnerable. To be sure, custom does much to harden men; and as Mrs. Neatskin had, every day and night for a whole ten years, threatened to depart from this earth, it is not so great a matter of surprise that her husband became at length comparatively unmoved by the alarming menace.

"It's very good of you, Baron—very kind, indeed, to come and sit with me; for whilst things are as they are, I must be wretched company."

"Not at all—by no means—delightful!" said the Baron, to Philip Neatskin.

"Ha, Baron! it's friendly in you to flatter—friendly, and like yourself; but, at such a time, with Mrs. Neatskin getting weaker and weaker——"

"Poor woman!" said Von Boots; "and so long, too!"

"For ten years and upwards," observed Neatskin, "and every day weaker and weaker."

"She must have been very strong at first," said Von Boots.

"A fine woman in her time, Baron," remarked her husband; "but she 's disappointed all the doctors."

"Doctors!" cried Von Boots, and his moustache curled, like a worm, with contempt; "doctors!—dey know nothing about it."

"You are right, Baron," exclaimed Neatskin, with some animation, "d—d a bit!"

"It 's all as de luck happens," said Von Boots.

"Just so," rejoined Neatskin.

Still and lovely was the summer evening on which Neatskin and his friend, sitting in a green arbour, thus discoursed of death and fate. Pipes and best tobacco—brandy, and that better fluid, water, cold as chastity, from a neighbouring fountain, lay before them. The blackbird whistled as the Baron filled.

We envy not the feelings of that man who could sit in that bower planted in that orchard, with such sights and sounds about him, yet remain unmoved. Happy are we to say, Von Boots was not that image; for filling his tumbler with a most scrupulous hand, the water boasting no drop above the brandy, whilst the glorious sun flamed in the west, and the blackbird sent his music in mellow gushes from an apple-tree, the Baron emptied his glass adown his throat, and waving his hand about him, he placed it upon his heart, saying, "Dis—dis is true boetry."

"It is, Baron; here 's to you;" and Neatskin took a draught.

"Dis is," cried Von Boots, his hand again upon the brandy, "dis is dat elevation of de spirit, which, my dear friend, in all de calamities of dis life is true philosophy."

"Not a doubt of it," answered Neatskin, and he prepared to mix. "Brandy-and-water, my dear Baron, is like marriage: to be palatable the parties should be equal. Nothing can be better," pronounced Neatskin, sipping at his glass. "What say you to a game?" and, with the question, Neatskin pulled out a drawer, and took hence his darling cards and cribbage-board.

"Anyting, my friend," answered the benevolent Baron; "anyting to ease your wounded soul. Since de wife of your bosom is all but torn from you—it 's your deal—since de partner of your joys——"

"Ha! it is kind of you, Baron; at such a time, too—in the hour of affliction—cut to me," said Neatskin, who proceeded with his game, mingling his domestic cares with his cares of crib, and had already been twice victor, and was preparing for further conquest, when Dolly ran into the orchard, and crying and wringing her hands, informed her master that his wife was unaffectedly dying. Neatskin paused in his deal, and, with an incredulous eye, challenged the countenance of Dolly. It was plain that the good man's feelings had before been trifled with. "Dying, Dolly?"

"Really and truly, Sir—all too true, now, Sir—the doctor says you *must* come, Sir," exclaimed Dolly.

"I 'll come instantly—directly," said Neatskin, and he played his last card, pegged his hand, and—distracted by his emotion—made the cards, and proceeded to deal again.

"Indeed, Sir," cried Dolly, "mistress is very bad, indeed."

"Poor soul! Fifteen-two, say I'm—and six are thirty-one. The doctor 's with her, I hope?" asked Neatskin.

"The doctor sent me, Sir, and told me to say, Sir, if you wished to see dear mistress alive—the doctor, Sir——" and Dolly paused.

"He 's a very clever man—one for his heels," muttered Neatskin.

"But, mistress, Sir!" cried Dolly; "she 's at the very brink of the grave." And Dolly ran into the house.

"Spades are trumps," said the Baron.

"The very thing I want," cried Neatskin. "Eh? The girl's gone! Make haste, my dear Baron, for she 's an excellent woman. Twenty years we have been together, and—and—that will spoil your crib, I think; twenty years we have been one, and—fifteen-two."

"Oh, Sir! oh, Sir!" shrieked Dolly, returning—"too Sir!—too late!"

"Too late! What you mean?" asked the Baron, for N skin was dumb. "What you mean, too late?" And Baron played.

"Gone, Sir! You wouldn't come; and now, now,"— Dolly sobbed—"now, quite gone."

"What!" cried Von Boots, "and is your mistress dead!

"Dead," answered Dolly.

As she spoke, Neatskin played his last card.

"Dead," repeated Dolly.

"Good for one hole," cried Neatskin, and, pushing cards from him, he caught the eye of the Baron, observed, a broken voice, "the last game to me," and took out his ha kerchief.

Baron Von Boots, a deep observer of the human he attempted not to stem a tide of sudden woe. Hence, suffered his friend to sit with the napkin to his eyes, and silence stretched his right hand to the brandy. The blackb was silent—all nature seemed in a moment hushed, when plashing of the liquor from the bottle to the glass doubtl struck upon the consciousness of Neatskin, for he looked and, faintly smiling on the Baron, held forth his hand to gr his comforter. Von Boots, either bewildered by sudden ca mity, or mistaking the yearnings of his host, gave him brandy-and-water, which Neatskin, affably passing the er of his friend, instantly swallowed.

"She was an excellent woman," said Neatskin; "but must all go."

"Dat is philosophy," replied Von Boots.

"An excellent woman, and—gone at last! Let me se my poor head!—let me see—oh, I remember. Ha! excellent woman! The first game of the second rubbe me."

CHAPTER II.

We have endeavoured to shew the conjugal happiness of Neatskin by an incident rather than by discourse. A mutual indifference of some years' cultivation had prepared him to support his sorrow like a man; hence, in a few months, two at most, he had regained his old tranquillity, and, with it, a new zest for the pleasures of this frail and uncertain being. In a word, Philip Neatskin contemplated a second marriage!

"Baron Von Boots,"—it was thus Philip consulted that sagacious oracle—"what may you call the prime of life?"

The Baron wisely answered, "When I was two score, I called de prime of life forty—when two score ten, fifty—and, in anoder month, I shall be determined dat there is no prime of life till fifty-eight."

"Exactly, Baron: I am in the prime," said Neatskin.

"Every gentleman may take his prime as he shall think fit; for myself, I never was so prime as now. Mr. Neatskin," and the Baron looked more than usually grave, "I shall make you my friend." There was a pause, which the Baron employed in ringing either end of his moustache around his forefinger; the operation finished, Von Boots, looking dead at Neatskin, said, "I am in love!"

Neatskin laughed, rubbed his hands, drew close to Von Boots, and, patting him on the shoulder, cried, "Bravo, Baron! And is the lady rich?"

"She could buy a synagogue," answered Von Boots.

"And you agree with one another—you accord—your sentiments harmonise?" asked Neatskin.

"Nothing could be better," responded the Baron. "You see, as for myself—I want de money, and, for de lady, she wants de blood."

"Blood! blood! Baron Von Boots!" exclaimed Neatskin.

"My fortune is in my veins," said the Baron; "de fortune of de lady is in de Bank. We can accommodate—ha! ha! we can accommodate."

"To be sure—I understand. And you really have hopes that your goddess will——"

"Hopes! Am I not Baron Valhallah Von Boots? You shall be my friend—you shall lend me one, two, or tree hundred pound to court de lady."

A shadow fell upon Neatskin's face: however, it passed in a moment, and, taking the Baron's hand, he assured Von Boots that, for a poor hundred pounds, he should not miss a woman who could buy a synagogue. The Baron, with an ursine hug, acknowledged the favour; at the same time intimating, that in love, as in war, a ready supply often insured success. Neatskin allowed the wisdom, for he straightway handed the cash to Von Boots.

Mrs. Agatha Mouser was left, at the age of forty-two, the disconsolate widow of an indefatigable money-broker; the poor man had, in the pursuit of wealth, taken great pains to damn himself; and, at threescore-and-five, died with the sweet consolation of leaving his partner the richest Niobe in England. Her beauty, and, perhaps, her gold, had excited very public attention, and there was scarcely an unappropriated gentleman with a great taste for a fortune, but with little hopes of inheriting or earning one, who had not at some time flattering thoughts of Mrs. Agatha Mouser. Among those aspiring knights the Baron Von Boots was the boldest, and if we take his own unbiased opinion, the best. Rumours touching the humility of the lady's origin, gave great hopes to the Baron. "With all dat gold," he would cry, "she must want de blood!" And so assured was he of the pressing condition of the widow, that, with his usual benevolence where good was to be done, Von Boots did not long hesitate as to the time and manner of doing it. With a third of the borrowed hundred pounds most tastefully laid out upon his person, the Baron Von Boots strode to the dwelling of the widow. As he stood at the threshold, victory seemed perched upon his new beaver. To knock at the door was little less than a summons to surrender.

"Von Boots—Baron Valhallah Von Boots," said the possessor of that name and dignity, handing his card to the servant, who, bowing the very lowest acknowledgment of the combined greatness, bore the important document to his mistress, at the time presiding at her levee of passionate adorers. At least half-a-dozen amorous swains offered their morning sacrifice to the golden goddess of their idolatry. Baron Valhallah Von Boots came, the seventh worshipper!

The widow, with an urbanity of the very highest order, commanded John to shew the Baron up.

Reader, if perchance thou hast been a generalissimo—for, indeed, we write to all classes—and hast, with colours flying, trumpets blowing, drums beating, marched to the gates of a conquered city, where bareheaded, barefooted, and, it may be, in token of humility, with halters round their necks, the pallid burghers have knelt presenting thee with the keys of the public treasury, making thee master of wealth incalculable—if, in thy diversified life, thou hast ever had this green and golden spot, thou must remember the beating of thy heart, the flushing of thy cheek, the dilation of all thy little anatomy to something vast, Titanic! Such was the feeling—such the sweet inflation of Von Boots. How airily he mounted the staircase! A spider, crawling on the carpet, came beneath the left toe of the Baron, yet felt him not: but, in that moment, Von Boots could have danced upon an unbroken cobweb.

Another instant, and Baron Von Boots found himself in the glorious presence of Mrs. Agatha Mouser. He bowed, and then gazed at the widow with that deep, possessing devotion, that a miser looks upon a money-chest. Again the Baron bowed, put his hand to his heart, smiled, shewed his teeth, and gazed complacently around him. In the opinion of Von Boots, the citadel was taken—the victory was won.

Mrs. Mouser had the deepest respect for a Baron in the abstract, but—we can only account for it on the old score of

female fickleness—she had little veneration for Von Boots in the concrete. Mrs. Mouser knew full well for what she was pursued; she was a shrewd woman, and, at the school where she had received her humble education, it would appear that great pains had been taken with her arithmetic; if such were not the case, it was then very evident that she had a great natural genius for numbers. Mrs. Mouser, at a single glance of the wide, smiling mouth of the Baron, saw in him another candidate for her fortune, and, since they were not to be divided—herself. This she saw, but would not see. Hence, as if awaiting the business of the Baron, she observed, glancing at her visitors, "All my friends."

A common man would have stood abashed at so cool an invitation to speak of burning love before half-a-dozen rival witnesses—but not Von Boots. He could not permit himself to waver in his first conviction of assured conquest; and, therefore, receiving the words of the widow as a general, yet courteous introduction, he made up to the gentlemen, and, vehemently shaking the hand of every one of the six, declared most cordially that "Mrs. Mouser's friends were his friends."

"Sir, you do me honour," said Mrs. Mouser; "and might I be favoured with a knowledge of your business, I——"

The Baron Von Boots, strong in his blood, supported by the consciousness of the widow's wants, together with his own conviction that he, of all men, by the nobility current in his veins, could best supply them, cast a look at Mrs. Mouser, a look intended to convey his business. Mrs. Mouser, wilfully insensible to such an easy mode of communication, was again about to urge Von Boots to speak, when one of the six young gentlemen, with a laughing face, tripped by the widow, whispering something as he passed, at which the lady smiled, and then looked complacently upon the Baron, who smiled back the courtesy with thankful interest.

"I am afraid, Baron Von Boots," said Mrs. Mouser, in her softest voice, "I am much afraid that you are a little late."

The Baron had the politest way of expressing a dissent. He lowered his shoulders, flung back his hands, and grinning down upon the carpet, shook his head with a most eloquent motion.

"I—I am afraid you are," repeated Mrs. Mouser.

Von Boots, suddenly divining the cause of hinderance—conceiving that the lady alluded to a previous engagement with one or more of the six fortunate gentlemen whose hands he had grasped, raised his head, and, whilst sparkles of flame broke from his eyes, and his mustachios seemed to work like leeches sucking blood, glared at the full half-dozen. The gentlemen, huddling together, now stared, now tittered, and now ventured to laugh outright. Von Boots was the politest of men; he, too, smiled and laughed; but there was deep tragedy meant in his merriment. The hyena laughs.

"Pray, Baron, from whom do you come?" asked Mrs. Mouser.

Von Boots, full of his blood, bursting with a sense of his antique nobility, triumphing in the assurance of his marketable greatness, gave a flourish of his cane, and, bringing the end of it perpendicularly down upon the carpet, made answer, "From de Sea Kings!"

Mrs. Mouser, though not a very agile person, fairly jumped at the announcement. The Baron saw, and glowed with satisfaction, at her astonishment. He repeated the astounding intelligence, "From de Sea Kings!"

"I should say," remarked one of the gentlemen to his friends, "cabin-boy to Noah."

At this the young men laughed, and the obliging Von Boots gave another chuckle.

"Ha! Baron, this visit is very flattering," said the widow. "You are very kind, but I fear my dancing-days are over."

Von Boots paused to consider: there was some hidden meaning in the speech of the widow. "Dancing-days!" It

was no matter—he must say something. "Ha! Madam," cried the courteous Baron, "if you cannot dance, you—you," and how the Baron smiled as he spoke! "you can love a little?"

"And, pray—ha! ha!—well this is comical—pray, Baron," said the widow, "do you teach love?"

Von Boots spread all his right hand over his heart, pressed that valuable very hard, and answered sonorously, "I do."

"In how many lessons?" inquired one of the gentlemen.

"And at how much a quarter?" asked another; a laugh following each query, and Boots benevolently joining in it.

"Teach love as well as dancing!" cried Mrs. Mouser; "well, I declare, Baron, you are an accomplished person."

"Dancing! Teach dancing, Madam — oh! ha! Dat gentleman did tell you dat I—ha! ha!" and the Baron laughed hoarsely, a feeling of vengeance thickening his voice as he looked threateningly first at the unfortunate informant who had, out of pure wit, whispered the false intelligence to Mrs. Mouser, and next at the remaining five, who had joined in the exquisite joke. "I—I have taught gentlemen to dance," said Von Boots.

"Where?" asked the innocent widow.

"Where ball and powder made de music," answered the smiling Baron; and, in two minutes after the declaration, the widow found herself alone with the descendant of the Sea Kings. "And now, Madam," cried Von Boots, seizing the advantage, "let us understand one another."

"I shall be very happy, Sir; and if you please," said the widow, "as speedily as possible."

"I have not, Madam," said Von Boots, with a frankness well worthy of imitation by persons in his condition, "I have not of my own one guinea."

"I deeply regret your misfortune, Sir," cried the widow; with a motion of her hand towards her pocket, for, in those days, the female pocket was not exploded.

"You have tens of thousands!" exclaimed Von Boots. "Still, Madam, you want what I come to offer."

"I want nothing, Sir—nothing that"—and Mrs. Mouser moved towards the bell, but was seized by the martial, yet tender arm of the Baron.

"You have de gold, Madam—de gold," and Von Boots spoke as though he spoke of something offensive; "but I—I," he cried, raising his voice, and falling upon his knee, "I have de blood!"

CHAPTER III.

The Widow Mouser, with strange perversity, or stranger ignorance, would or could not perceive the possibility of any connexion between her funded guineas and the "ruddy drops" that visited the heart of Von Boots. In her homespun opinion, gold could not be ennobled—a guinea carried with it innate nobility; with her, Plutus was beyond the gifts of Herald's College. Hence, when the Baron Valhallah Von Boots, descendant of the Sea Kings, spoke of his blood, he conveyed to the sense of Mrs. Mouser nothing more than a barren truism; he might as well have proclaimed himself the possessor of two arms and the same number of legs, in the expectation of being embraced as a prodigy: all men, in the belief of Mrs. Mouser, had blood; and, if she had any choice in the quality of the "wine of life," it was certainly in favour of a more recent vintage than that flowing in the veins of Von Boots. She, therefore, received the declaration of the Baron with the most placid insensibility, happily lost upon Von Boots, too much rapt by a sense of his own importance to perceive the defects of others. He had received from fate an unpurchasable glory—he carried in his pulses a treasure not to be equalled by the wealth of mines, or by the riches of the deep—of greater worth than gold, costlier far than oriental pearls—and yet, for the simple consideration of bed, board, and lodging

on a handsome scale, the said small advantages solemn assured to him by a priest, he had persuaded himself to of a participaton of his greatness to—yes, the daughter of a trun maker, and widow of a dusty money-changer! Was it possibl then, that the Baron Von Boots could dream of a refusal—eve in the vagaries that enter the brains of sleeping men, could h imagine a repulse? When he fell at the feet of Mrs. Mouse he knelt only to rise a conqueror!

Mrs. Agatha Mouser—the first slight tremor past—wit stood the passionate fervor of Von Boots with all the coolne of a thrice-wooed widow. The Baron gazed with a kee admiring, yet languishing expression—casting a look upon th lady like that thrown by a schoolboy through the window o a cake-shop; a look of love, and yet a look devouring. Th widow was about to speak, when, catching the eye of Vo Boots, she burst into a vehement laugh. The Baron felt th blood tingle in his cheek as he gazed upon the open mouth- "with all its pearls complete"—of the merry Agatha: she evidently a mirthful, volatile creature, thought Von Boots, an with the thought he called up a look of deeper meaning,— such earnest significance, that the widow became upon th instant serious, and with scorn at her lip, and anger in h eyes, she tore her hand from the melting grasp of her lover putting it to the unbiased opinion of the Baron Valhallah Vo Boots to answer this searching query—"Is the man mad, o is he but a fool?"

A mine sprung from beneath the knees of Von Boots cou not have made him jump from the carpet so quickly as th question of the widow. What he thought to speak—what h thought to do,—or, whether, indeed, in the uproar of his fee ings, in the astonishment that paralysed him, he was capab of any thought whatever, we feel it to be a most difficult an delicate matter to decide. However, from the known charact of the Baron, we may venture to assert that he would ha said or done something very terrible, had not his bosom frien

and most intimate creditor, Philip Neatskin, at that moment entered the room!

That the Spartan boy should have cracked hazel-nuts whilst the fox was dining off his viscera, we hold to be a very poor instance of the triumph of mere will over physical agony, compared to the awful composure acted by the Baron Von Boots on the appearance of his friend: the demon rage, begotten by despised love, was tearing into little pieces the rejected heart of Von Boots—Cupid, more cruel, as more cunning than ten foxes, struck at his liver,—and yet, crown him, ye stoics! the Baron smiled, and waved his hand most courteously towards the new-comer.

"Eh! what's the matter?" cried Neatskin; passing the Baron, and, full of the tenderest concern, making up to the widow; who, no sooner saw a third party enter the room, than she let fall at least two tears. "Agatha, what's the matter?" inquired Neatskin, and the words, like red-hot needles entered the heart of Boots. Neatskin, his friend and creditor, was his rival! The monster jealousy may have green eyes, but sure we are it has a black face; Von Boots, with the sudden passion, was black as Nox!

"These impertinences must be ended," said Mrs. Mouser: "can I have no rest until I take shelter in a church?"

"Boots," said Neatskin shortly, and the Baron, firing at the ignominious abbreviation, and marching up to the clipper of his name, his bosom dilating like the crop of a pouter pigeon, the descendant of the Sea Kings thundered—"Baron Valhallah Von Boots at your service."

"What is all this?" asked Neatskin, in a tone that forcibly brought to the recollection of the Baron his late loan of a hundred pounds. Neatskin spoke not so much like a rival, as a creditor. "What is all this?" he repeated.

"I tink, Mr. Neatskin," answered the Baron, with grim politeness, "I have already told you."

"Why, you never mean that this was the lady, who—who—" and Neatskin stammered.

"I have de blood," said Von Boots.

"Blood!—A fiddlestick for your blood! You must please to remember, Mr. Baron, that I have pretensions here, and, moreover, remember that——"

"Pardon me," said the Baron with real politeness, his heart thumping at his waistcoat, and his eyes burning like glow-worms, "I tink I know what you would say— I do remember —I shall not forget;" and, with these words, significantly spoken, the Baron looked at his new beaver and ruffles, purchased by the money borrowed of his rival. "I shall not forget, Mr. Neatskin," repeated the Baron with all the dignity of a true gentleman, "and you will please to remember that whatever you have to say to dat lady, I shall be found to have de blood." With the very best bow of which the Baron was capable, he then turned from the room, and sought his lowly lodging. The Baron sank in his one rush-bottomed chair, and, though at the ripe age of fifty-eight, felt that he could weep like a child. He dashed down his new beaver, and springing up, jumped upon it—his right-hand nails were fixed in his left ruffle, and threatened instant dilaceration, when a late prudence— for it might have interfered to save the damaged hat—withheld the Baron's arm. To crush a beaver, that "should be worn in its newest gloss"—to rend Brussels lace—was not the readiest way to pay for either article. Neatskin was his rival—his insulting rival; as such, must answer him. Neatskin was his creditor—his contemptuous creditor; as such the Baron must answer *him*. It was easy for Von Boots to send a challenge—not so easy to send a hundred pounds! And, with this thought, a sense of humiliating obligation steeped the Baron in a cold sweat. Again, with malignant eye, he glanced at the unoffending hat—again, with uncertain fingers, played among the threads of his left ruffle. What was to be done? The laws of honour—the custom of society, would not permit him to challenge his creditor. Where was he to obtain seven-and-thirty pounds, for so much had he already expended out

of the fatal hundred? Miserable wretch! Was there no rich, helpless man that he could rob? No shopkeeper that he could cheat of goods to the amount—nobody upon whom he could even commit a forgery for the sum, that he might triumphantly return the money to his loathsome rival, and so receive the satisfaction of a gentleman? Such, in the hurricane of his feelings, were the wild, fitful thoughts of the Baron Von Boots. How he writhed in his new cambric shirt, bought with the damning gold of Neatskin! The shirt of Nessus—the truth of the allegory for the first time flashed across the Baron's mind—was a shirt not paid for! He stamped his foot upon the floor, mad with his wounded honour: again he stamped, and was a third time about to smite the uncarpeted deal boards, when he was surprised by the thin, sharp voice of his landlady outside the door, brought there by the summons, inquiring "if he wanted anything?" Nothing—nothing at all," answered the Baron with vivacity, and jumping up, he ran down stairs, and standing in the street, looked above, below, about him, for seven-and-thirty pounds!

Wretched Baron Valhallah Von Boots! Vain were thy looks—vain thy speculations, as faces advanced upon and passed thee! No—there was no one set of benevolent features in which thou couldst espy a chivalrous sympathy for a man bleeding at a thousand pores for only seven-and-thirty pounds. Not a single passenger couldst thou detect with visage promising oil to thy wounds: every face looked hard and stony—the good men of the earth were, it was plain, all within doors, and none save vulgar, mercenary calculators walked the streets. This disappointment was felt the more acutely by the unfortunate Baron, from his firm conviction that there were thousands, ay, it might be, tens of thousands of sons of honour who would rush to aid him in his little dilemma, could they be made to know it—could *he* only know their names and dwelling-places! As it was, he seemed doomed like a restless ghost, to walk the earth, with the insult of Neatskin blooming

on him, it not being permitted by the code of honour to borrow money of a man, and the money yet unpaid, to cut his throat as a receipt in full. The Baron groaned in bitterness of spirit and was about to return to his unostentatious cabin, when a thought direct from Mercury, or some such inventive god, flashed through the Baron's brain, and irradiated the Baron's countenance. "There was a way — with moderate luck, a glorious way to snatch revenge. He would stake all upon the one golden chance: Fortune, though blind, would take pity on the feelings of a gentleman, and at least give him the opportunity of living, or being buried like a man of honour." Erect was the head,—elastic the step of the Baron Valhallah Von Boots, as ennobled, sublimated by this thought, he took his way to a gaming-house. Now, granting that the Baron won the balance—that luck attended him, making up the hundred pounds,—he might only win to lose the greatest stake that poor humanity can play for. To lose, with Von Boots, was to be assured of a gain—to win, was to risk the loss of all. If fortune smiled, a cypress wreath might be her special gift. Was it really a waiter, or was it Death himself, that smilingly bowed to the Baron as he entered the Hall of Chance, and took from him his hat and walking-cane?

Winding-sheets grew about the candles, as the Baron Von Boots hovered round the table. He saw them not, else he had received them as gladdening omens of his destiny. The Baron seized the dice-box.

> "Honour! thou blood-stain'd god, at whose red altar
> Sit war and homicide!"—

Didst thou not smile grimly on thy Boots, seeing him cast sixes? Again the Baron threw; but this time lost—again and again, he staked and won not. Honour and Fortune played the game, and Honour still threw deuce ace. The Baron, reduced to his last five guineas, became almost desperate. If he lost them, he had nought to do but to slink home, go to

bed and sleep,—distracting thought, until any hour to-morrow; —if he won,—if he recovered himself—if he pocketed the full one hundred pounds—delightful, glorious prospect!—an hour after daylight, rapier in hand, he might be tilting at his bosom friend.

Honour cogged the dice! The Baron—be the story brief—taking his hat and cane from the servant, descended the steps of the Temple the winner of full fifty guineas: enough to pay back the hundred to his rival, and more than enough to fee a surgeon. Ere Baron Von Boots slid between the sheets, he penned and sent a challenge, and with it the hundred pounds to Philip Neatskin.

CHAPTER IV.

The Baron never condescended to register a true and particular account of his feelings when he awoke with the full consciousness that he must quit his bed at a most unseasonable hour to have, it might be, cold steel run through his abdomen, or curiously inserted between his ribs. It is a pity that mankind have not been enriched with the reflections, which a man in the situation of Von Boots must inevitably make. Did Honour appear to him the same bright, majestic presence as some twelve hours ago? Or rather, did not Honour seem a meddling, exaggerating knave—a fellow, half-bully, half-mischief-maker? Did not this same Honour walk about, delighting, when a little hole appeared, to rip it into a wide rent; when, but for his meddling and mischievous propensity, the flaw neatly darned, had escaped all notice? Had not, we would have asked the Baron,—had not his charity towards the imperfections of his fellow-creatures increased, and that very considerably, nay, grown gourd-like, from a mere seedling into a full-grown charity in one night? Had not his gall decreased—was not the bitterness almost sweetened away in a new benevolence? Was Neatskin such a scoundrel?

We will imagine this change in the Baron—we will, for a minute, fancy that these questions were put by the Baron's common-sense to the Baron; and then we must picture to ourselves Von Boots lying in his bed, pacific, gentle, subdued into philanthropy, willing to close his eyes, to fall into a dream of Arcady and the golden age, when all honour was comprised in not being a sheep-stealer,—and when the true satisfaction of a gentleman, was the satisfaction felt and taught by old Silenus with a swag-bellied wine-skin.

See,—the Baron Von Boots is about to dose; he is sinking like a babe to rest, when—hark! what a rattling of the curtain-rings! And see what a hideous, grotesque, foolish, savage, simple monster thrusts his jolter-head and hundred arms between the curtains, and as with a thousand roaring, squeaking, pulling, laughing, croaking voices, cries, "Get up!" The Baron Von Boots, startled at the sounds, sits bolt upright: he rubs his eyes—looks full at the monster, and in another second, bounces out of bed, and grasps his stockings!

Reader, the monster that startled the Baron Von Boots from dreaming—that now stands over him, watching him as he draws on his hose, is at once the most terrible and the most harmless of monsters. He is, in fact, whatever you choose to fashion him: if you tremble before him, he is an ogre, and may swallow you alive; if you snap your fingers at him, he walks off like a detected cheat: he is now as ravenous as a vulture, and now as incapable of injury as the greenest goose. To the Baron Von Boots, and to nine valarous men out of a dozen, the monster is the vilest tyrant: there he stands with the Baron—and now walks with him to the glass—and now, on perhaps the last morning Von Boots has left him of his mortal life, makes him take particular pains with his toilet, that, let the worst come, he may appear a decent corpse, doing credit to himself and to his slayer. And who—what is this grim despot? who is this execrable tyrant—this mixture of the mountebank and man-eater? Gentle reader, you and we are

pieces of him; even so: little pieces, particles if you will, of this same quacksalver and cannibal, christened and known as the World's Opinion. Baron Von Boots, and certainly Philip Neatskin, got up particularly early to cut one another's throats, only to please us, as you must allow, singularly interested in the matter; and whether one or both are killed, or whether they shake hands and embrace, the circumstance will, as you must allow, considerably impede or accelerate our digestion. However, the monster sticks to the skirts of Baron Von Boots, whilst another monster—another and the same—drags Philip Neatskin out of bed, who, from the very bottom of his heart, turned as it is to a jelly, curses the tyrant, as he bows to him. Philip cannot tie his neckcloth, his fingers tremble so; his teeth—all that he has—rattle in his head; he damns the World's Opinion, and then, like a whimpering boy, suffers himself to be carried by it to punishment. Left alone, how differently would Philip construe what the big-mouthed world calls injuries. With what a chastened, elevated spirit would he consider the petty affronts of rash and ignorant persons, whose faults and follies—foibles he would call them—are made the silly prologues to sanguinary tragedies! In his own high and private philosophy, he would think no jot the worse of his nose for being soundly pulled—but then there was the World's Opinion leering at the outraged member—there was yourself, to say nothing of ourselves, exacting reader, staring at the nose, and insisting, in the name of all the noses in the universe, on signal and summary vengeance!

Never, never did Philip Neatskin feel such benevolent yearnings towards the whole human race as on the morning when he rose and went forth to slaughter his fellow. Yes; at the moment—the awful moment—when he stood opposed to his deadly enemy—such was the fountain of goodness opened in his heart—that we can answer for him he felt a new-born love for all the brotherhood of man. And with this exalting impulse, how provoking to be compelled, rapier in hand, to stand upon your guard!

The morning was chilly—the clouds hung low, black, and pall-like—a drizzling rain began to fall, and all things promised a most uncomfortable meeting, when Philip Neatskin, attended by his second and his surgeon, arrived on the ground, where were already waiting the Baron Von Boots, his very particular friend, and a gentleman who had performed, it was related, an amazing cure on the wounded ventricle of a heart in a certain duel that had taken place somewhere in Upper Saxony. The Baron Von Boots received his adversary with a lofty air of politeness; the seconds bowed, and the professional gentlemen shook hands, making the warmest demonstrations of friendship. "Why, why," thought Philip Neatskin, leering at the amicable surgeons, "why can we not all embrace?" With this Christian thought, Neatskin beckoned to his second: the exact words spoken to his friend we heard not; but we can aver that the gentleman started suddenly, and peremptorily exclaimed, "Impossible!" at which decision the jaw of Neatskin fell almost as low as his waistband, and the bile stirred up in his sensitive anatomy, suddenly gave to his face the colour of a dying marigold. "Impossible!" repeated the second, "unless"—ha! there was hope, then, for Neatskin, who fairly grinned at the goodly prospect—"unless you give up the widow. Let the Baron carry off Mrs. Mouser, and you may shake hands, and go home to breakfast." This was a hard condition; to a man deeply smitten as was Neatskin with the lady and the money—a condition not to be acceded to. Without thinking of the consequences of the word, but thinking solely of the guineas of Mrs. Mouser, Neatskin, in his turn, exclaimed, "Impossible!" and the second with graceful alacrity presented to the combatants the choice of weapons.

Since the time of Boots and Neatskin there has been a considerable and most praiseworthy improvement in—may we use the word?—the economy of duels. Swords are happily, exploded; and ball and powder—certainly powder—have taken their place. We consider this a most fortunate, nay, a

most intelligent and enlightened reform of a wild and blood-thirsty practice. For instance, in these, our happy days, two gentlemen meet—the signal is given—the deadly tubes are discharged, and one of the parties, by the counsel of his second, expresses himself, his cravat smelling horribly of gunpowder, perfectly satisfied. His wounded dignity has been dressed with saltpetre, charcoal, and lead—the last of which has gone by him like the idle wind—and he returns to his lares "a wiser and a *sounder* man." But who knows what imminent danger he has escaped? The bullet may have whistled within a hair's-breadth of his whisker, it may have "shot madly" by his heart—nay, more, the mortal ball, by some strange forgetfulness on the part of the second, may not have been deposited in the pistol; nevertheless, no man can question the propriety of the satisfaction, and the quarrel dies an honourable death. How different the result when gentlemen measured swords! The rapier was a cruel, uncompromising weapon; it would have blood. Ay, it may be urged, but then the slightest scratch would serve. Very true, we answer; but, in the heat and deadly enmity of a thrust, who shall ensure the length and depth of the scratch? It may not be "so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church-door," but sufficient for all mortal purposes. With swords there must be blood; let the seconds be the most pacific, the most prudent of men, let them go out with the very best and most humane intentions, they must place the naked, pointed weapons in the hands of the combatants—they cannot, by any accident, clap buttons to the steel. Now, the pistol permits a generous alternative. To return to our combatants.

Neatskin stands holding his sword as though he held a viper by the tail. The Baron Von Boots, all Mars in his sanguinary visage, prepares him for the onset. He takes off his coat, and Neatskin shudders at the cool determination of his antagonist: did he mean to butcher him? Having carefully laid his coat upon the grass, the Baron next unbuttons his

waistcoat, coolly whistling the while. "You will excuse me," cried Baron Von Boots, bowing to Neatskin and his second, "but dis is always my way;" and, as he spoke, the Baron laid his waistcoat on his upper garment, Neatskin almost groaning at the preparation: but when the Baron proceeded to take the silver-washed shirt-buttons from his wrists, and having placed them in the left-hand pocket of the only part of his dress he had determined to keep upon him, began to pull his shirt over his head, Neatskin fairly burst into tears? All his old friendship, all his latent regard for the Baron Valhallah Von Boots arose within him; he cast away the hated sword, the murderous steel drawn to be warmed within the heart's-blood of his friend, and, rushing to Von Boots, flung his arms around him?

"What, de devil!—mein Gott!—get out!—what dis!" exclaimed the Baron, astonished at the *accolade*, and blinded, muffled by his best cambric, ignorant of the person who embraced him. "What dis?—get out?" again roared the Baron.

"No, no!" cried Neatskin; "I feel it is impossible—I cannot take your life—I cannot imbrue my hands in the blood of a man whom I love, respect, and honour. Dear Von Boots——"

"Neatskin," cried the Baron, grinning with a contemptuous surprise—"what—what is all dis?"

"Put on your coat," answered Neatskin, incapable for the time of further speech—"put—put on your coat."

The Baron Von Boots, with a significant, self-satisfied look, adjusted his under garment, replaced his wrist-buttons, put on his waistcoat, and thrusting his second arm into his coat, placidly observed to Neatskin—"Den, Sir, I am to understand dat you give up the vidow?"

"I cannot be your assassin, dear Von Boots," answered Neatskin.

The Baron, however, was, in some matters, a man of pre-

cision; therefore, unsatisfied with the vague assurance of Neatskin's friendship and humanity, Von Boots repeated the question touching Mrs. Agatha Mouser.

"There are ten thousand widows," said Neatskin, "but how many real friends? My dear Boots, win her and wear her."

The Baron was about to embrace the generous Neatskin, when he paused to survey the person of his late opponent's second, who, astounded, scandalised at what he called the meanness of his principal, muttered certain epithets, such as "adventurer," "vagabond," "bastard of Odin," and other names, which the Baron, in his humility, conceived to be applied to himself. However, that he might act without precipitancy, he begged to inquire of the gentleman if he, the Baron Von Boots, was the subject of his soliloquy? The second ingenuously answered yes; and declared himself quite prepared to maintain the truth of every disjointed syllable. The Baron bowed an equal readiness to dispute it; and Neatskin, that an affair in which his dear Von Boots was so vitally concerned might come to instant issue, avowed himself willing to second even the Baron's antagonist. The offer was coldly accepted, the late second, but now principal, observing that Neatskin "would do as well as a better;" and the preliminaries quickly arranged, behold the parties thrusting fiercely at each other. The Baron was an accomplished swordsman; by every rule of the art, he ought to have finished or disarmed his opponent in a trice, but luck, mere vulgar luck, so often in this world of chance, steps in and wins the stake that deepest calculation long has played for. Luck, then, aided perhaps by youth, directed the arm of the Baron's antagonist, for, after a few passes, Valhallah Von Boots lay upon the grass, bleeding like the dying Gladiator.

"Are you hurt?" asked Neatskin, very unnecessarily, of the wounded man; who evidently thought so, for, shaking his head, he made no answer.

"Very serious," said one of the surgeons in a low voice, and the other nodded ominously.

"And seconds are principals!" exclaimed Neatskin, in the tone of a man who has suddenly discovered a most unpleasant truth; and without waiting to take leave of his moribund friend, he ran with his brother second to the coach that had conveyed some of the party to the ground, and jumping into it, swore to make the fortune of the coachman if for once he would drive like fifty Furies. The Baron's antagonist, following the vehicle, supplicated to be taken in.

"Come, come," cried one of the surgeons, minutely examining the wound, "it's not so bad. You'll live, and have the widow yet."

"She has the gold," said the Baron Von Boots, with a sickly smile.

"Heaps of it," said Esculapius.

"And I—I," cried the Baron, with exceeding satisfaction—"I have," and his wound poured out the evidence, "I have de blood."

THE ROCKING-HORSE.

The Garden of the Tuilleries,
As travell'd Britons know,
Midst goodly groves of orange-trees,
Hath statues white as snow.

One morning, Indolence my guide,
This garden-ground I trod,
With maiden, tripping at my side,
Some four years old and odd.

With loving eyes, serenely sweet,
And happy, thoughtless words;
And lustrous face, and dancing feet,
And voice so like a bird's!

She spoke, and sombre thoughts grew bright—
She laugh'd—'t was sorrow's knell;
As wicked imps, 't is said, take flight,
At sound of holy bell.

She prattled of each marble form,
So life-like in its air—
The hero in the battle-storm,
The beautiful, the fair;

Of cold Diana's placid face—
Of Shepherd with his flute—
And then the wondrous Centaur-race
Did touch the talker mute.

Her simple brain was overwrought
With Goddess, God, and King;
And like a shadow fell deep thought
Upon her marvelling.

(So walk'd she on, but who may tell
What forms she brought away—
To stand reveal'd at mem'ry's spell
And glad some distant day?

For lovely things that lie around
Our childhood's seeming night,
Come forth like buried art, new-found—
Fair Hebes, brought to light.)

Well, leisurely we bent our walk
Where constant plenty yields
Perennial store of dust and chalk,
To famed "Elysian Fields."

Now, ere you reach that happy plain,
Since, reader, you have eyes—
You can't but stare at statues twain
Of Herculean size;

That, trump in hand, rein each a steed
Impatient of the check—
A winged beast of fiery breed,
And "thunder-clothed" neck.

The little maiden stood and gazed,
Then cried with all her force,
(And tow'rds the steed her finger raised,)
"Pa, that's a—Rocking-Horse!"

"A Rocking-Horse! No, no, my child,
It is the horse of Fame;
And they who mount that creature wild
Enjoy a lasting name."

"And who lives there, behind the wood?"
Then ask'd the simple maid;
And pointed where the palace stood,
In massive might array'd.

"There Philip lives, the kingly lord
Of Frenchman stout and true;
And there King Charles had bed and board,
And so had Lewis, too.

"And Buonaparté, England's foe——"
"What! all these kings at once,
Or all a *long, long time ago?*"
Inquired the little dunce.

"No, not so long: attend and hear,"
And straight I had begun,
When fancy saw the shades appear
Of monarchs, one by one.

Doom'd "Louis Capet," stript of might—
Napoleon on the rock—
The Eighteenth Louis—Charles, a wight
Design'd for monkish frock.

And all like April sunbeams fled,
Save one, and one alone,
Spared from the exiled and the dead,
To sit a brittle throne.

If thus, I thought, the lords of earth
Are but the toys of fate,
A passing ray their royal worth,
And shadows all their state—

Let whosoever bridle Fame,
Turk, Frenchman, Grecian, Norse—
East, west, north, south—the steed's the same—
'T is but a—Rocking-Horse!

———

THE
TAPESTRY-WEAVER OF BEAUVAIS.

THE oldest people of Beauvais remembered Schatten the tapestry-weaver. Some vowed he was threescore, some a hundred years old; and ever as the subject was touched upon, Schatten would widen his huge mouth, and cry with a low chuckle, "Ay, ay, a thousand—more or less. I shall live to see wrinkles in the sun." None knew from what stock he sprang—from what land he came. Such questions he would ever parry with some extravagance. "I was born of felspar and quartz, and my home was the Hartz Mountains when they were no bigger than mole-hills." And thus Schatten lived on. He saw the child rise into manhood—wed—become a parent—a grey-headed man—a corpse; and so with the child's child, and yet no change came upon Schatten. He stood, a flinty image gazing on dying generations.

A hovel in an obscure part of Beauvais was the dwelling of the weaver. There was his tapestry-loom; and there, day after day, and night after night, would he work, at times droning a song to cheer what seemed the monotony of an eternal employment. Notwithstanding the inexplicable mystery about the man, he was, on the whole, a favourite with his fellow-townsmen. There was something so meek in his demeanour, so placid, so unassuming, and his speech was so soft and gentle, that although his name had been mingled in strange recitals, he had never been molested, but, on the contrary, was generally considered a harmless, well-meaning creature; one, who far from sneering at the pleasures of

youth, looked upon them with seeming satisfaction. No one more frequently witnessed the bacchanal revelries of the topers of Beauvais; for, though Schatten was no drinker himself, he beheld with unaffected pleasure the loose jollity of others. The like at feasts: although he was temperate as a cameleon, he would most readily carve huge collops for others. He seemed to hold in peculiar admiration a purple, bloated face and swagging paunch, though his own sharp visage was as yellow as saffron, and his figure lank as a thread-paper. This urbanity towards the failings of others was, it will be conceded, the secret of his popularity. Though he himself abstained from all animal indulgence, he not only did not gloomily lecture on the lawlessness of appetite, but, on the contrary, smiled on its achievements. This charity hath served many besides old Schatten.

But there was another circumstance that greatly assisted the goodly reputation of the weaver: it was the character of his many visitors and pupils. His hovel was the resort of the loveliest girls—the most beautiful youths, not only of the town of Beauvais, but from the great city itself—from elegant, voluptuous Paris; for even at the period of which we write, it was distinguished for the refinement and luxuries of life.

Schatten, in his capacity of tapestry-weaver, had pictures of every variety of subject; and it was his good fortune, that those professors who excelled in the beautiful art, seemed by common consent to seek old Schatten, that he might immortalise their radiant sketches in his still more exquisite tapestry. There was no subject which painting could pourtray—no imagination which it could robe in life and colour, that was not ready for the loom of Schatten. If a battle were the theme, there might be seen contending heroes, with stern rapture in their faces, glory about their heads—their every limb glowing as with Mars' own fire—their swords like sunbeams, and the smoking blood more like libations to purple Liber, than torrents in which the human life gushed forth.

Thus, a battle woven by old Schatten was a grand and glorious thing—each combatant was an excited god; whilst the drained and pallid carcass—the dreadful wounds, with jagged and gaping mouths—the rigid muscle straining against death—the fixed and stone-like eye, and clotted hair—all the gross, substantial horrors of systematic slaughter, were thrown into the shade: they were not to expose that common liar—Glory. If the subject were beauty, there might be seen—as erst was chosen by the antique master—one charm from twenty different faces, making a miracle of perfection. All that was voluptuous and entrancing shone in the dewy light of woman's eye; there was an eternal youth in her red lip, a tenderness in her warm cheek: too pure for the earth, too exquisitely fragile, she seemed of a sisterhood 'twixt humanity and angels. The same masterly hand was displayed though the subject was the banquet of the glutton—the supper was still spread "in the Apollo." The same power shewn in the golden heaps of the miser: the food, the wine, seemed ambrosia and nectar, bestowing immortality on the lip that tasted: the gold glittered like something dropped from the skies, to be worn as amulets against calamity.

A man so potent in his handicraft as Schatten, might have surrounded himself with all the symbols of wealth; and, had he been ambitious, have successfully contended for the highest honours of citizenship. But, it was plain, he valued gold as ashes: and for the trappings of state and place, the most regal shows, the pomp and blazonry of kings, were with him matter for a jest.

"Alack!" cried Michel Sous, a withered money-scrivener of Beauvais—"I hear 'twas a brave sight; and plague on my shanks! I have missed it. Which way went the procession!" The man of bonds and pieces remained gaping for the answer of the tapestry-weaver, who stood, cross legged, leaning on his staff, with a face immoveable as granite. It was a day of triumph, a time of holiday, and Michel had for once quitted

his bags and desk to sun himself in the glory of his fellow-townsmen. "Weaver, I say, which way went the procession, and where shall I find it?"

"It went, after some turnings, into the churchyard: take up a handful of mould, and, in truth, you clutch a part of what you seek."

"Why, thou art drunk, merry, or mad!—The churchyard and mould!—I ask you where went, where *is*, the procession?"

"Where I tell you. I saw it pass by me, and after some windings and shiftings, I saw each brave puppet—that strutted as though the angels were looking at it—I saw it shrink, and bend, and totter, and the yellowness of age crept over it, and its eye faded, and its hair whitened, and it crawled into the earth as the fox slinks beneath his cover. The trumpets lay dumb and cankering in the soil—the rustling flags dropt tinder at the breeze—the rust-eaten sword crumbled beneath the mattock of the digger, and rank grass grows above the pomp of the last hour."

"Why, Schatten, thou art dreaming. Blessed St. Mary! thou surely didst not see the sight, else thou hadst told me a truer story of its progress."

"Not so: trust me, I saw the revel—but I beheld it from the pinnacle of time; and I tell you again, all the men who passed me I watched into the churchyard. Their haughty eyes—their trophies, flags, and clamorous pipes—I say to you, they are dust! The shout of triumph hath died in the distance, and *hic jacet* is now the only tongue."

"So, so—a riddle," crowed the scrivener; and he hobbled on, to seek a less perplexing respondent.

Such were, at times, the answers of old Schatten, who, when he pleased, could be as grave and oracular as a father confessor. Such were his reflections on pageants, which, to many thoughtless and happy minds, were the symbols of all earthly greatness. It was his pastime to analyse appearance—to unravel the glossy web of policy—to unfold the swathings of vain pomp and

ceremony, and point to the foul mummy they encased. H would he vary this custom with smiles and laughter and wi sayings, which gave a savour to the wine they honoured. H would, with his thin voice, troll a song in praise of beau and, with quick conceits, prick on lusty youth to deeds jollity and wild adventure; nay, he would often mingle in t revelry. Many a time have the townsfolk of Beauvais laugh at the gambols of old Schatten, who, pranked in his be would trip it with some blue-eyed fair one, who, seeming unconscious of the deformity of her partner, would gl through the dance all smiles and sweetness, as though mer youth were wedded to immortality, and wrinkles and gr hairs were not the inheritance of the children of earth. Al but a few months, or weeks, and the poor maiden—she wh seemed the embodied principle of beauty and motion—was the "clods of the valley," a mass of blank insensibility.

Various were the ways by which old Schatten had insinuate himself into the good graces of the people of Beauvais. T please them, he would, when in the humour, act twenty di ferent parts—now he would be a learned doctor, and now mountebank; at times he would utter the wisdom of sages— at times play a hundred antic tricks, making his audienc shout with merriment. For one long winter did Schatte profoundly lecture upon laurels, crowns, swords, and money bags; and, like a skilful chemist, would he analyse the component parts.

"This," cried Schatten, producing a semblance of the wreath, "this is the laurel crown of one of the Cæsars:—how fresh and green the leaves remain!——Ha! there is no such preservative as innocent blood—it embalms the names of mighty potentates, who else had never been heard of: steeped in it, deformity becomes loveliness—fame colours her most lasting pictures with its paint! The fields that grew this branch were richly manured: tens of thousands of hearts lay rotting there—the light of thousands of eyes was quenched—

palaces and hovels, in undistinguished heaps, were strewn about the soil—there lay the hoary and the unborn—the murdered wife and the outraged virgin — and showers of tears falling on this garden of agony and horror, it was miraculously fertile—for lo! it gave forth this one branch, to deck the forehead of one man! In the veins that seam its leaves are the heart-strings of murdered nations; it is the plant of fire and blood, reaped by the sword!——Such is the conqueror's laurel.

"And here is the despot's diadem!——Many a time, like glowing iron, hath it seared the brows it circled. Of what is it composed? What wonderful ingredients meet in this quintessence of worldly wealth? See, the passions and the feelings that helped to make it, still haunt their handiwork: their shadows live in its glittering metal and its flashing gems. Full-blooded power, with a demon's eye, glares from this ruby —leprous fear trembles in these pearls—in every diamond, care or compunction weeps a tear! Throughout the gold, I see a thousand forms, dawning and fading like hues in heated steel:—there, fancy detects the assassin with his knife—there, the bondsman snaps his chain—there, is the headsman—there, the civil war! These are the shades that haunt the despot's crown; that wear him waking, and screech to him in his sleep. A nation's groan is pent up in its round. It is a living thing that eats into the brain of the possessor, making him mad and drunk for blood and power!

"The miser's money-bag!——Another monster—all throat. Could its owner have put the sun itself within this bag, the world for him had been in darkness—perpetual night had cast a pall upon creation—the fruits of earth had withered in the bud, and want and misery been universal; whilst he, the thrifty villain! smugly lived in bloom, and in his very baseness found felicity!——And yet, what was the worth of all this bag contained? Though it was stuffed with wealth, it was hung about with fears. As its owner slid his palm into the

heap, he would start as though he felt the hand of death were hidden there to grasp him. He was almost blind within a world of beauty:—his eye saw no images save those painted by gold; his ears heard not, save when the metal tinkled; his tongue was dumb, if it spoke not of wealth: the glittering pieces were to him the children of his heart and soul—dull offspring of the foulest appetites; yet he hugged them to his bosom—he hugged them, and in his dying hour they turned to snakes, and stung him in the embrace!——This is the miser's money-bag—the abode of reptiles, the sepulchre of the soul!

"The sword!—Ceremony sanctifies it. Some kingly words are spoken—a trumpet is blown; straightway the sword is *ennobled!*

"The lawyer's gown!—the masquerading dress of common sense. There is a living instinct in its web: let golden villany come under it, and with a thought it flows and spreads, and gives an ample shelter to the thing it covers; let poor knavery seek it, and it shrinks and curtains up, and leaves the trembling victim naked to the court!"

Thus, in his graver moments, would old Schatten preach to his hearers; then, with a thought, he would break from the solemn discourse, and make merriment with the self-same objects. Thus, like a skilful juggler, he would hold the conqueror's laurel, that hardy plant, to his lips, and with a puff blow it into dust; he would change the tiara into a huge snake, monstrous and ugly, and make the beholders start at its contortions. The money-bag he would ravel into a shroud: he would melt the sword into drops of blood, and turn the lawyer's gown into a net of steel. Whilst these tricks made him a favourite with the young and gay, his learning, and the thousand stories he had of men of all ages and of all ranks, rendered him an oracle of wisdom to the studious. It was observed that Schatten, whilst narrating any history, always spoke as though he had been an eye-witness of the circum-

stance he detailed; nay, as though he had known their most secret thoughts.

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And who is Schatten, whose history is yet unfinished? Who is this mysterious Weaver, whose deeds, if chronicled, would fill thousands of folios? He is everywhere about us: in the solitude of our chamber, in the press and throng of the street, in the wilderness and in the city.

The passions colour the tapestry of life; but old Death is the Weaver.

—"MY DAYS ARE SWIFTER THAN A WEAVER'S SHUTTLE."

THE SIEGE.

"This morning, Reinhold Dort, the money-changer, was found dead in his bed."—

"Yesterday, Helena Hecht, the fair young wife of Peter Hecht, the clothier, in the market-place, was taken from him."—

"Old Abraham, the apothecary at the Elephant, is gone too."—

"And the pretty babe of Martha Gratz."—

"And the burgomaster's page."—

"And Gottfried, the blind beggar at the western gate."—

"Shame! shame!" cried twenty voices in according chorus, and some frowned their discontent, and some idly shook their clenched hands above their heads.

"Ye are bold citizens, to cry thus out on death, and death's works," said a young man, who, leaning against a door, listened with thoughtful face to the tragic gossip of the talkers.

"Death's works!" exclaimed one of the knot; "marry, yes—death and the governor."

"And the governor? A money-ringer of threescore and odd sleeps into death; a young wife defies the doctors; the man of rhubarb finds all physic vain; a baby dies teething; a beggar of eighty, needs at last a grave;—and all these deeds," cried the young man, with a contemptuous laugh, "ye lay upon the governor!"

"And on none but him," replied one of the crowd; and a shout from his fellows approved his answer. "On none but him. There is no hope of relief for the city."

"How know you that?" calmly asked the youth.

"I—I have no hope," said the man doggedly.

"Happily, Simon Holzkopf,—though, as I believe, the quickest tailor of your quarter,—the safety of the city rests not upon you. It may be saved, though you have lost all hope."

"And we are to behold our wives and children fall down dead before our faces!" cried Simon; "hear ye that, my masters? we are to starve, and starve in silence too!"

"The governor, I doubt not," cried another of the crowd, "finds patience in his larder."

"I saw him yesterday," said a third, "and it made my blood boil to see how sleek and fat he looked. Ha, Simon! I wish that you and I, and every honest burgher among us, had no more than a lark for every capon swallowed by his governorship since the siege—only one mouthful of sour wine for every quart he has taken of the best Rhenish."

"Ay, ay," cried the tailor, and he clutched his jerkin, "our clothes would hang with better credit to the makers, eh, Master Caspar? for I think I have seen the day when your feathers have been finer, ay, and have shone upon plumper limbs. That 's hardly the leg of Martinmas last," and Simon Holzkopf glanced askant at the attenuated figure of the young man, who had braved the displeasure of his fellow-townsmen by advocating the policy of the determined governor.

"Never heed the leg, Simon," said Caspar airily; "it may dwindle to a rush, still my heart shall not be too heavy for it."

"And is there no hope of a capitulation? will the governor not relent?" asked more than one of the mob.

"Another week—only another week—'t is said, he purposes to keep the enemy out.—If, by that time, no succour comes—"

"It matters not," cried an old man, "what banner floats upon our walls, since death, death will be at all our hearths."

"Men!" exclaimed Simon Holzkopf, "shall we endure this? Shall we drop into our graves, whilst the pampered governor——"

"Down with the tyrant!" shouted the mob, and Simon, animated by the cry, proceeded in his oration.

"Whilst the pampered governor feasts upon the best, what cares he for our shrieking babes, our weeping wives?—he, gorged with the fat of the earth, drunk with the wine of——"

"Peace, fool!" cried Caspar, and, at his indignant voice, the eloquent tailor stood suddenly silent, with open mouth; "peace—this is no hour to babble falsehood, foolish at any time, most base and wicked at a time like this. We have all suffered—all must suffer; not one throughout the city but has felt the fierceness of the war. In every place has hunger had its victims."

"The nuns of St. Ursula have eaten their grey parrot," exclaimed Hans Potts, an idle wag, known to many of the mob; and, whilst some laughed at the sally, some, condemning it, called out for Caspar to proceed.

"Not one among us," cried the young man, "hath fared more hardly than the governor. You—you, Simon Holzkopf, who know every dish upon the governor's table, every flask of wine in the governor's cellar, tell me the dainty that he fed on yesterday. You cannot guess—no; it is too rich, too costly, for your simple apprehension—you cannot dream of such a rarity! Fellow townsmen!" and young Caspar turned for a moment from the abashed Simon to the still increasing crowd, "You remember the holiday at Easter last? The governor rode through our city, and feasted with the merchants at their hall. The horse he sat, a king might have backed—a beautiful, a glorious thing, a creature that scarcely touched the earth—an animal of perfect frame and blood. You all remember how your eyes were fixed upon it, and the brute, as conscious of its beauty, pranced to your shouts. Yesterday the governor dined off that horse; with the meanest of his men, he drew lots for a choice morsel of that noble steed."

"A burgomaster's wife," cried Hans Potts, "has made a

roast of her monkey. Hard times, my masters, when the siege sends our best friends to the spit!"

"Silence, hound!" exclaimed an old man; "is this an hour to fling about your sorry jests, when those we love are dropping dead around us? Peace, mummer! Speak you truly, Caspar! is the garrison so straitened?"

"Go you to the walls—ask not of me," replied the youth; "go, and behold the sight I've quitted; if that convince ye not, hang up the governor, and call in the foe."

"What sight? what sight?" roared the mob.

"Famine feeding on a thousand men—burly soldiers, shrunk almost to skeletons; their flashing, hopeful eyes deep set, and flickering with a horrid glare; their manly cheeks pinched in with want; their hearty, jocund voice sunk to a hoarse whisper; their gallant bearing changed to slow decrepitude; their looks of victory to the blank stare of coming death."

"Horrible! horrible! down with the governor!" exclaimed the crowd.

"They suffer this, but suffer nobly," cried Caspar; "not a murmur, not a look of treason to the stern will of him who rules them. Martyrs to the glory of their arms, they stand resolved—come what will, they have sworn with the governor to hold the citadel another week."

"Glory! a pretty word, i'faith! Shall we dry our wives' eyes with it? will it fill our children's bellies?" cried one of the crowd.

"I trow they've something more toothsome than glory for supper," said a second; "or does the governor's lady and his delicate daughter feed off the insipid dish? If so, 'twill spoil their pretty looks." A derisive shout followed this remark, and again the crowd called for vengeance on the governor.

"Let's to the citadel!" cried fifty voices, and "To the citadel!" hallooed the mob. With the words, the crowd rushed onwards, but soon halted in their course.

Many paused, as they avowed, to reconsider their determin-

ation; the greater part slunk home; and when, at length, the discontented townsmen halted at the outer gate, few were to be seen save the half-dozen immediate partizans and admirers of Simon Holzkopf and Hans Potts. Whether they demanded instant audience of the governor, at the time surrounded by his family, gazing wistfully from the walls for expected succour, or whether, contented with his stern answer just rendered to the civic authorities then in the garrison, they held their peace, the archives of the city give no note. Quitting the discontented self-dubbed deputies, let us return to the hero of our story, Caspar Brandt.

"And the good widow, Caspar?" asked the old man who had rebuked the wit of Hans Potts, and who, on the flight of the crowd, walked slowly towards the market-place with the youth; "these are sorry times for necessities like hers; how fares she?"

Caspar answered not—strove with manly strength to repress the emotion; but a deep groan burst from his lips—he paused, and quivered like a struck reed.

"Caspar—Caspar Brandt!" cried the old man, and caught the youth in his arms. "Blessed Virgin! what ails the boy?"

"Nothing—nothing; a sudden faintness, nothing more;" and Caspar, with a sickly smile, pressed the old man's hand.

"By all the saints! your hand burns like heated stone. Come—come to my house—I have yet half a cup of wine, that, for the love of old times, for the grateful thoughts I bear your mother, kind in the days of misery and death to me and mine, shall be spared you. Tell me, how fares the widow?"

"Sick, Master Martin, sick almost to death," answered Caspar. "For two months she has kept her chamber—for two months has been almost helpless. Still, her state brings this poor comfort with it; she knows not the extreme misery of the town—knows not the bitter sufferings of her friends and neighbours."

"And her wants, Caspar? Alas!" cried the old man, "affliction has made me selfish — steeled my heart to old acquaintance, else I had sought you long since. Now, heaven help me! I can do nothing. Her wants — how are they supplied?"

"She needs but little, of the simplest kind, and that — Heaven be thanked!—I have obtained, may still obtain, for her. She will die—she cannot wrestle with the sickness that consumes her; she will die!" repeated the young man in a hollow, hopeless voice, and big tears started from his eyes, "but not—not with famine;" and, as he spoke, the youth clenched his hand, and trod the earth with new strength.

"Nay, her years give every thing to hope," said Martin. "At little more that seventeen — ah, me! it seems but yesterday — she was your mother. And still she has kept her youthful face—still, in looks, has seemed no other than your elder sister."

"Ay, Master Martin, ay. God pardon me!" exclaimed the youth, and the tears poured anew down his cheeks. "God pardon me, and make me humble! but now—now I cannot think of losing her, and pray for meekness."

"Hope should be the young man's staff, as 't is the old man's crutch," said Martin. "You will not lose her, trust me, no; the present troubles past, all will be well again. Come—in a half-cup of poor wine," said Martin, lowering his voice as he passed a passenger, who paused a moment, and leered with the malice of keen want at the old man, talking too loudly of a priceless luxury, "let us, good Caspar, drink to better times. A half-cup, boy, a poor half-cup," and the old man sighed, as he paused at his threshold. Drawing the key from his pocket, he unlocked the door, and led the way into a house, where once comfort and heaped plenty gave a constant welcome. "Sit down, Caspar: your father has sat in that chair, when the roof quaked with the laughter of fifty throats— when Fortune herself served at the hearth, and seemed my

handmaid. Well, well, the hearth is quenched now; the old, old faces are passed like morning shadows; the sweet, constant voices are heard but in my dreams; and I sit at my cold fireside, an old, grey-headed, solitary man. But come, boy, the wine!" and Martin took a small flask from a shelf. "What stirs you?" asked the old man, seeing Caspar start.

"Your pardon, Master Martin—is not that bread?" and Caspar pointed to a small loaf by the flask on the shelf; at the same moment a deep blush crimsoned the young man's face, and he sat as though detected in an act of shame.

Martin took the loaf, and, gazing in Caspar's face, a tear shone in the old man's eye, and his voice trembled as he spoke. "Is it so, lad? God help you! is it so?"

"Forgive me, pray, forgive me!" stammered Caspar.

"I have another," said Martin: "your mother was the playmate of Margaret, my own bright girl—tended her in sickness—would, with the love of early girlhood, watch her in death; I tell you, boy, I have another," cried the old man with vehemence; "take it, and God increase it to you!"

"Never! I am not that sordid, selfish wretch to rob old age," cried Caspar, and he sought to reach the door.

"I tell you, boy, I have another," exclaimed Martin: "you hear? another," and he placed himself before the youth.

"Where is it?" asked Caspar; "make me see it; and so bitterly has the time wrung us, that, for her dear sake, I will, I must, despoil you."

"The loaf is—'t is—'t is locked up—the key in my chamber. I have wine—have feasted twice to-day," said Martin; but Caspar mournfully shook his head, and, hurriedly embracing the old man, attempted to depart. "You do not quit me thus," cried Martin, holding the youth. "Heaven forgive me! I knew not that things had gone so hardly with you. Hear me; to-morrow I have a new supply—a friend, an old, old friend has promised me. If, boy, if you would see your

mother live, cast not away her life upon an idle form. Caspar Brandt, in the name of your dead father, whose spirit at this moment lingers at this hearth, share this with your father's friend." Saying this, old Martin forced the loaf into Caspar's hand, and broke it. "Now, boy, get you home," said Martin, seating himself; "bear my good wishes to your mother, and leave me to my supper."

Again Caspar embraced the old man, and, swallowing a half-cup of wine forced upon him by the hospitable host—for surely hospitality was in that broken bread, that meagre vintage—hastened from the house. Martin, for the first time, tasted food that day, but he sat not in solitude at his deserted fireside, for he ate his crust, and drank his humble draught, with the spirits of the dead gathered about his board; and the dry bread became manna, and the wine a draught for saints.

Caspar hurried to a distant quarter of the city, where, at the commencement of the siege, he had secured an asylum for his sick mother; where, day and night, he had watched her sinking health. The rent of three small houses, bequeathed to her by her father, most frugally applied, had enabled the widow to support herself and child; but, since the war had closed about the city, all trade had ceased, debts were no longer paid, social obligations no longer respected or acknowledged. It had been the chief care of Caspar to disguise from his mother the extent of the calamities that pressed around them; and though, deceived by his filial tenderness, she knew not half the misery that threatened them—half the horrors raging in the city—she read with a mother's eye the haggard story written in her son's face: it was plain that he was sinking beneath the task of administering to her comfort, her repose. He had, on the day on which our story opens, been many hours from home; and the widow sat with a beating heart, and with a thousand thoughts of undefined danger busy in her brain, watching the declining rays of a spring sun.

Every sound smote her soul with disappointment, for it was not Caspar's footstep. Thus she sat, until suspense became a torture—until, with her overwrought fancy, she had filled her chamber with phantoms of terror, until she was surrounded by a host of fears.

"Caspar! Caspar!" she shrieked, and sprang from her chair as the youth entered the house.

"Mother!" exclaimed the boy, and in a moment he stood in the chamber, embracing his parent.

"Now, God be praised!" cried the woman, "God be thanked, and may my doubts—the fears of a widowed mother—meet forgiveness! Oh, this is a blessing!" and the widow again caressed her son.

"Mother, how is this? Why did you rise to-day—and what is here?" and Caspar pointed to the widow's cloak, for the mother, worn with anxious watching, had resolved to seek her son abroad.

"You have stayed late, Caspar, very late," said the widow, evading an answer to his question—"very late. What has happened? what news from the walls?"

"We shall beat them yet, mother," said Caspar, with a forced smile; "fear not—still we shall have merry days. The governor is strong in hope—we shall beat them yet."

"Alas! my boy, you are pale and weary—need rest and nourishment."

"A little rest, mother, only a little rest," said Caspar, "for to-day I have fared nobly with our old friend, Martin, of the market-place. I have drunk wine to-day, mother; and see, here is bread for supper," and the boy placed a portion of the loaf upon the table, and hastily quitted the room. Descending a staircase, he unclosed a door which opened into a little stone-paved court; a goat ran to him, and gamboled about him. Caspar, breaking the bread which he had received from Martin, gave it to the animal to eat. "Come what will," said the youth, looking mournfully upon the feeding creature,

"come what will, you must not go supperless;" and Caspar, reserving only a small piece of the loaf for himself, gave the remainder to the hungry goat. He then, with new looks of cheerfulness, returned to his mother.

"Yes, Caspar," said the widow, "I feel that this misery will end—it would be wickedness to doubt it. Your love, your tenderness, my brave boy, must find the recompense of happy days. Such virtue cannot pass away unknown and unrewarded."

"I am rewarded, ten times overpaid, dear mother, by your fond words—your doting looks. There, you are better to-day, I am sure, much better; your voice is stronger—your eyes brighter," said the son. "Let this hateful war once cease—let these horrid tumults end—this sickening, desolating want give place to old, familiar comforts, and you will be strong, be happy once again."

"I am happy, Caspar,—believe it, boy, profoundly happy. But for these times of peril I had never known my son. Good, gentle, and tender, I ever thought him; but I had not known his full nobility of soul, his generous contempt of wrong, his scorn of selfishness in selfish times."

"Mother!" cried the youth, blushing at the praise, and playfully placing his hand to her lips. As they sat, embraced in each other's arms, the still young and beautiful face of the widow, a face to which even sickness had added a soft and melancholy sweetness, and the flushed, animated, manly countenance of the youth, presented a picture of the purest love, the holiest affection, dignifying human hearts—the love of mother for her child, the answering devotion of child to parent. Never was maternal tenderness more exquisitely manifested—never filial duty more devoutly paid. Thus they sat, and Caspar, looking in his mother's face, taught himself to hope for coming health—never had she looked so sweetly beautiful. "Let the war be ended," he thought, "and all will be well again." With these new hopes Caspar rose, and, taking a

small earthen vessel from a shelf, quitted the room. An hour and more had elapsed since the goat had taken her scanty meal, and Caspar was again about to descend the stairs that led into the court, when he was startled by a loud, quick knocking at the door.

"Who knocks there? what seek you?" asked Caspar, his hand upon the door-bolt.

"Open the door, Caspar Brandt; we would speak with you," answered a voice without. "We are sent by the burgomaster: honest men fear not the magistrate."

At these words, Caspar drew the bolt, and opened wide the door. Instantly the passage was filled with the under-officers of justice. "Caspar Brandt," said one of them, "you must come with us."

"First tell me for what," answered Caspar, drawing back.

"That you shall know in proper season," said the officer; "in the mean time, you are our prisoner."

"Prisoner! Impossible! With what am I charged? What have I done?" asked Caspar.

"Tut, tut, you have heard the proclamation; for all your innocent looks, you know well the governor's orders: hark, my masters! do ye hear it?" and the officer pointed his staff towards the court, where the goat was at that moment heard to cry.

"Away with him!" exclaimed one of the officers, a gigantic burly fellow; and as he spoke he seized the youth by the collar, and suddenly dragged him into the street, where he was instantly surrounded by the guards.

"Be still, be patient, Caspar Brandt," said one of the officers; "for, if the people should learn your crime, they'll tear you piecemeal."

"Crime! crime!" cried the bewildered Caspar.

"The proclamation of yesterday makes your offence a fatal one. What! at a time like this, feed a beast with fine wheaten bread!—when Christian babes are withering with

want, cast loaves to goats!" cried the officer. "But come, and take my counsel—come peaceably—the judge will hear you."

Caspar, conscious of the innocence, nay, of the goodness, of his intentions, resigned himself into the custody of his guards, and, assured that he could satisfactorily justify the seeming wastefulness condemned by the officer, felt confident of speedy liberty. His only anxiety, his only fear, was lest his mother had overheard the parley between himself and his captors, lest his sudden absence from the house should cause her new alarm. As he was led to the justice hall, the following crowd continued to increase, and with eagerness inquired the offence of the prisoner. At length one of the guards—he had been roughly handled by Caspar when hauled into the street—dropped a few malicious hints to two or three earnest inquirers, who were not slow to piece out an ample enormity wherewith to charge the culprit. The story ran from mouth to mouth, losing nothing as it went.

"Oh! the monster! feed cattle with bread! nourish dogs on loaves, and men and women perishing with hunger!" cried one.

"Dogs!" exclaimed a second, "feed dogs! I doubt not he hath somewhere a whole pack of hounds, fat and sleek with food stolen from Christians."

"Ha! ha!" shouted Simon Holzkopf, "and this is the rare fellow who preached patience to us this morning; who gave us a sermon on the goodness of starvation! Look at the villain, townsmen—did ye ever see so stout, so burly a rogue, filled to the lips with the fat of the land?—but that is not enough; 'tis not sufficient that he must lard his own stomach, but he must rob the poor to feed his beasts."

"What said the proclamation?" asked another; "the governor's proclamation of yesterday?"

"What said it?" echoed Hans Potts; "why, it said death to all who should keep a dog, a cat, nay, so much as a linnet,

to consume the food that Christian lips are white for. And you heard the knave this morning talk of the dinner of the governor. Well, he forsooth must keep a pet goat—ay, must run away from schooling us, to throw I know not how many loaves to his pretty favourite. Well, well, if there 's justice left in the city, we shall see a hanging-day!"

"To the gallows with him!" cried a dozen voices, and the cry was immediately taken up by the whole crowd. "No trial! to the gallows with him!"

The crowd increased, and the shouts for vengeance on the unfortunate Caspar became loud and incessant. The square before the justice hall was filled with the multitude, whose roaring voices pealed through the building.

"Let the governor judge the prisoner; the governor's proclamation makes him guilty. Let the governor be judge," said the burgomaster, unwilling to bear the obloquy, which, in better times, would be certain to rise against him, should he condemn Caspar.

"The people cry for his death," said an officer; "we had hard work to keep him from their nails."

"Ay, but let the famine cease, and the same people will curse the judge who sentenced him. Let the governor who makes such laws, execute them; to the garrison with the prisoner!"

Such were the words of the burgomaster, who with his officers had that morning vainly endeavoured to move the governor to capitulate, and who now sought to aggravate the evils of his obstinacy. "Hang a man for keeping a milch goat!" said the magistrate. "No; again I say, since the sword makes laws, let the sword execute them. Take your prisoner to the garrison."

"The prisoner, Caspar Brandt, to the gallows!" again rose from the crowd, and rang through the hall.

"Take him through the western passage, and so you will avoid the mob," said the magistrate: and Caspar—who had

now resigned himself to certain death—was led away to the garrison, the hall still echoing the cries and curses of the multitude, who, when they learned the escape of their victim —or, we should rather say, his brief reprieve—followed, hallooing and shouting, to the walls, their rage redoubled by disappointment.

The governor, his officers, their men-at-arms, were speedily assembled, and Caspar Brandt, with pale yet unclouded and undaunted brow, stood before his judge.

"Young man," said the governor, "I am sorry for you; but these are times when the duty of the citizen becomes religion. Did you not hear the proclamation?"

"Ay, my lord," said Caspar, calmly.

"And braved it? I am sorry for you. The penalty is death."

"I am prepared to die," answered Caspar, "and yet—yet——"

"Speak," said the governor, "and boldly. If there be any doubt of your guilt—nay, if there be the slightest——"

"My lord, interrupted one of the officers, "we have brought testimony sufficient. Room there," and the officer beckoned to one of his followers, who, making his way through the crowd, flung from his back the carcass of the slaughtered goat.

Caspar sprang like a hound upon the fellow. "May the hand wither," he exclaimed "that did this!" and when, again seized by his guards, his eyes fell upon the slaughtered animal, he burst into tears, and covering his face with his hands, groaned, "Mother! dear mother!"

"This is no time to cast bread to beasts. Let the prisoner have a confessor, and then," and the governor paused, surveying the youth with looks of pity, "and then dispatch him."

"Here's Father Franz," said the officer, as an old monk broke through the crowd, and, without a word hurrying to Caspar, embraced him.

"My son! my dear son! Oh, my lord governor, what

would you with this youth? A nobler creature, a gentler soul, a youth in whom more virtuous gifts are mingled, lives not in the city. And here! a captive! What is his crime?" asked the monk.

"Look there, father," said the governor, and he pointed to the dead goat. "You have heard the proclamation, you know the measures which our care for the common good imposes upon all."

"Mine—mine is the fault," cried the monk.

"Thine!" said the governor.

"This youth—he has a mother—yet a young and comely woman, but that is little—it is her goodness—her tenderness, her more than motherly affection for the brave lad, that have made him forfeit his life for her from whom he drew it."

"But your share in his fault?" asked the governor.

"I was his mother's confessor, and, when her means failed, her physician too; for, in my youth, I studied medicine, and hence the lowly poor—thanks to my saint—have often owned the value of my skill. As the rigours of the siege increased, the poor widow pined and wasted; coarse food she could not take—death seemed inevitable. Milk was her only nourishment—this poor lad sold all but his last garment to buy the goat, now slaughtered at your foot—from day to day, and week to week, unknown to his poor, dying mother, deprived himself of needful food that the animal, to him a sacred thing since his mother's life depended on it, might not want provender—nay, when your proclamation was made known, dared to despise it, for a parent's life."

"I am sorry for him, most sorry," said the governor, with melting eyes, "but justice must be done, father, prepare your penitent for heaven."

"My lord, grant me one prayer; I ask not for my life," cried Caspar, "you say 'tis forfeit, the cruelty of the times demands it—let it go; the sentence cannot stain my memory—let it go. But my mother—oh, my lord! if ever yours were

dear to you, protect mine when I am gone; save her from the sharp misery of——"

A piercing shriek was at this moment heard—a shriek of such wild agony that the sternest soldier felt his heart grow cold at the sound. Another moment, and the wretched widow nerved by desperation, burst through the crowd, and fell upon her son's neck. "Caspar! my own boy! my brave—brave——"

"O God! she's dead!" exclaimed Caspar, as he beheld the white face, the fixed lips, of his motionless parent. The soldiers gathered about the mother and son, and a murmur of compassion rose from the crowd. The governor's wife and daughter had heard the tale, and flew to the spot to sue for mercy. Still, unconscious of the presence of all, save the one dear object, Caspar gazed on the pale features of the widow.—"She's dead—dead!" he uttered, in that cold, hopeless voice, that sounds of a broken heart.

"No, no, my son, her pulse beats," said the monk, "she breathes."

"Hark, hark!" exclaimed a soldier, and he leapt upon the wall—"the trumpets! our friends!" A loud hurrah rose from the garrison.

"Silence!" cried the governor, "I hear nothing;" and there was a profound pause, and the gloom of disappointment gathered on the faces of all men, who with hushed breath listened, their brows growing darker with the silence. Another second, and the trumpets came shrilly on the wind—shouts rose from the garrison, and a thousand weapons flashed from their scabbards.

"My lord, a sword!—let me—let me die there!" and Caspar, the monks having borne away his mother, rushed to the foot of the governor, and pointed beyond the walls.

"I grant your prayer," cried the governor; "and now, men, unbar the gates, and sally upon them; we have the foe between us."

Wild and joyous were the shouts with which the men rushed on the besiegers, who, hemmed between the two parties, were, after a fierce and sanguinary fight, utterly defeated.

Many were the deeds of valour done that day. Caspar fought as though he hungered for death: at least twenty of the foe fell beneath his maiden sword. He returned to the city with the conquerors, and next day appeared before the governor.

"My lord," said Caspar, "I am still your prisoner. I sought for death."

"And have found knighthood: I marked you on the field," said the governor, "am myself your debtor for a life. Kneel, and rise a valiant knight."

The filial piety, the bravery, of young Caspar became a famous story through the city. The fair daughter of the governor had heard from his mother's lips the history of her son's virtues, learned from her father the glory of his deeds, and, with her father's glad consent, became in after-years the young knight's bride.

From the day of the battle the widow gathered health and strength, and lived to be a grey-haired matron, happy in her son's greatness.

In the cathedral of the besieged city, may be seen a monument, where, lying at the feet of a warrior in complete mail, is sculptured a young milch goat. That monument records the filial piety of Caspar Brandt.

THE TULIP SHOW.

The dawning day found Skelton at his work, labouring in a little garden nook, enclosed from a wild and barren waste of the West Riding. The spinners, summoned to their task by the distant factory bell, crept from their hovels, and, some carrying their children on their backs, swarmed along the road. "What! still at work—still on your estate?" cried an acquaintance, as plodding onward, he suddenly paused and leant over the rude garden fence. "Umph!" he continued, "A notable park—a fine sweep of woodland—a rare orchard—kitchen and flower garden. You want but game preserves, a piece of water, and a gay boat, to make a man of you! In the devil's name," conjured the rough satirist, "why are you ever scratching here, like a mole in the soil?"

"Why? In truth this patch of ground is to me a little world."

"A little world! And these tulips here, in their bright purple, yellow and scarlet jackets—they, as I suppose, are the ladies and gentlemen in it! You serve them early and late, to stare at their fine colours. There's butterflies dancing about them, and—what is that wriggling and twisting in the dust? Ha! you've cut it clean in two with your spade! How the poor devil winds and rolls! Yet the butterflies caper and the tulips shine. Ay, Master Skelton, your garden *is* a little world!"

"Have done," replied the gardener; "it is not all for pleasure I am here to-day. On these very tulips have I placed my hopes." A rude laugh was the only comment. "Hush! you will wake the children."

"What! not up yet? The factory clock——"

I have stood and watched them, and I have wishe
hairs might come upon them in their beds—that
only wake to die. Then that clock! Does he not l
very pale?" mournfully inquired the father, as he
the youngest.

"In truth, not so pale as I could wish. There is
of colour in his cheek, I do not like."

"You see it, then?" exclaimed the parent wit
"I did hope my eyes were wrong! Must I lose hi

"No, no; no such mishap as that."

"Twice, twice have I watched that colour in
cheek; and both are in the grave. I tell you——'

"Ay; the matter about the tulips," kindly i
Skelton's blunt neighbour. "They seem of a rar
where did you get 'em?"

"On the night my wife was laid in the earth, I
how it was, but returning home, looking among s
that were hers, I found in a small packet, with a le
roots. The letter was from her brother; the last sh
from him. When she married, her family—they w
do, and I was poor—disowned her. They shortly
the country; we heard no more of them."

"And what had the letter to do with the tulips?"

"Nothing. Her father, like myself, had a love
and flowers; they being with the letter——

"Well, and how are the tulips to serve you now?"

"You may have heard—it came not to my mind till a few weeks past—that this year at Throstle Nest, to-day is the day, a tulip show is held. A prize of twenty guineas falls to him who can produce the finest flower."

"I see; this is your hope."

"You are the only creature who has heard it. Many would laugh, would sneer at me, were I to try to tell all that for weeks past I have felt in this patch of ground. When the thought first moved me, it seemed to come from my wife's grave. Morning after morning I watched the green shoots rising from the earth; stole minutes from my meals to run and look at 'em; my eyes fairly hung upon the flowers and saw them grow. And as I saw each leaf unclose, and day by day, nay, hour by hour, the colour steal into it; thinking of the prize to-day, the comfort it would give my wretched home, the liberty it would ensure myself—for there's a prison for me if I lose—I have fancied my wife was near me—knew my thoughts;—and I have cried like any child."

"But, still," cried the neighbour, "the children sleep. They'll be rarely rated."

"The youngest," cried the father, with mixed sorrow and bitterness, "is little more than seven years old. Yesterday he left his bed, whilst the cattle were yet in their stalls—nay, the very birds within their nests—to work. To get his day's bread he laboured fifteen dreary hours. He came home—as I have a soul, the boy came staggering along that path more like a drunken man than a little child. I—I couldn't speak to him, but ran away and hid myself till he was fast asleep. I looked at him then, and for the first time saw that flushing in his face. I tell you, in two now dead I've seen it. They shall not work to-day."

"Master Skelton, farewell; and the best of luck be with you;" and with this wish and a hearty shake of the hand his rough friend quitted him, leaving our gardener to his task.

The tulips were gathered, placed in a box, and entrusted to Catherine, a beautiful intelligent girl of eighteen, to carry them, for judgment, to Throstle Nest.

It was yet early morning, when Catherine, pursuing her errand, was encountered by Husk, the overseer of the factory, at which herself and young brothers were employed. She had halted on the road to look at her charge, when she was thus abruptly questioned: "So! art paid to stare at tulips! What is all this?" and the man approached the box.

"They are my father's; do not, pray do not touch them!"

"What if I tear them to bits?"

"You must not, would not. O Sir, if you knew how my poor father had watched them—prized them—with what earnest words he gave them to my care—how the tears started from his eyes as he put them from him,—though but a flower, you'd think it, Sir, a sin, to tear a single leaf. Pray, Sir, do not hinder me; I am going to Throstle Nest."

"What for?"

"I know not. My father desired me to give the flowers to the gardener, and then wait to hear if my name should be called."

"Your brothers, why are they not at the factory?"

"Last night the youngest was not well, Sir. My father——"

"Your father makes fools of you; has taught ye all above your place. He has whims enough for a gentleman. He's in debt, has four or five mouths to fill, and yet must waste his time on trash like this. But I shall secure it." And, immediately, the overseer possessed himself of the tulips.

"Are they not," meekly remonstrated Catherine, "are they not my father's?"

"I don't know that. How could he honestly buy roots like these—how keep you—for you hav'n't worked these three days? Your brats of brothers, too—but 'tis such parents as your father that help to fill our gaols."

"My father," answered Catherine, with a dignity far beyond

her station, "is poor and unhappy; but in all the world there's not a kinder man. He has taught his children not to complain of poverty, but patiently to endure it. Wearied with labour, he has stolen hours from his bed, deprived himself of needful sleep, to instruct us. Has read to us—talked to us—nay, never let a thing, a moment pass, that might convey a lesson to our hearts and strengthen us in goodness. Since I can remember, I have had no pleasure like looking at him—heard nothing like his voice. I pray, Sir, do not speak against my father."

"This comes," cried Husk, "of teaching young women to read! Here's a cotton-spinner's daughter talking like the squire's family governess. These tulips I shall take with me; I shall: so, peace, and troop. Why do you stare at me, and clasp your lazy hands? Home, and tell your father to get work—to send his brats to the factory. Come, too, yourself; or the parish officers shall hear of it. Do not answer; trudge! These I take with me." And the harsh functionary, with menacing looks and determined strides, carrying with him the tulips, left Catherine fixed by fear and wonder.

Meanwhile, every preparation was going on at Throstle Nest. All within its neighbourhood were making holiday; and as the important hour approached, new knots of visitors continued to throng the gardens, and assemble about the doors of the Silver Stag, an adjacent place of entertainment, which, we suppose, must be denominated an inn. Groups of spinners were gathered together, discussing the matter of the day; whilst a liberal donation from some of the more wealthy visitors supplied them with ale and bread and cheese.

"For once," cried the spinner who had surprised Skelton at his labour, and who was now seated at a table with half a dozen companions, "for once, let's be as happy as dogs, and bask and eat in the sun. Fare like this doesn't fall every day. Rare ale! it gives new blood to a man. My masters, has no one seen our mate, Skelton? I stole a half hour to see the show, and thought to meet him."

"I ha'n't seen him these three days," cried a second. "There's been no work for him at factory, and why?—he knocked down Master Husk!"

"And served him right," cried a third. "Any father would have done the like. Husk! he be like this cheese: good enough to look at, but come to the inside, and there's a woundy large rat-hole. I say, Nick—" and the speaker, addressing himself to the waiter of the Silver Stag, at the same time significantly displaying the cheese—"why don't thee kill the varmin?"

"Skelton!" cried several voices, as with an ill-suppressed look of anxiety he came among them; "Skelton, thee art welcome." And the ale jug was instantly pressed upon him.

"Is it over?" asked Skelton in a low voice of his neighbour of the morning.

"Not yet; are you just come?"

"I sent Catherine, though she does not know the stake I have to-day. I would not tell her—had not the resolution to come myself."

"Why come now; why not stay at home?"

"I sat there alone, almost counting the moments by the knocking of my heart; sat, till I felt I should have gone mad to stay longer; and now, I never seemed so little of the man. What children does trouble make of us!"

"Come, here's more ale to give you strength. The jug, here, for Master Skelton."

The jug was again thrust into the hand of Skelton, when a peasant who sat at an upper window of the Silver Stag, which commanded a view of Throstle Nest gardens, cried out, "They're going to declare prizes. Nick, run into garden, and call names as you hear."

Nick immediately obeyed the mandate; a dead silence ensued; Skelton scarcely breathed. A sudden shout was heard, and a moment afterwards, the loud shrill voice of Nick, exclaimed:

"Grand tulip prize of twenty guineas to Sir Harry Blomfield!"

Another shout.

"Second prize of ten pounds to 'Squire Thompson."

Another shout.

"Third prize of five pounds to Robert Grimstone."

"Is that all?" unconsciously asked Skelton of the rustic herald.

"Ees, all. There be three; three be enough, ben't they? And as there be three," added Nick, turning to the weavers, "let's gi' 'em another shout a piece."

Three more loud huzzas were given, as Skelton, with a death-like sickness of heart, hurried from the scene; and, the shouts still ringing in her ears, he sought his miserable home. There, however, new persecution awaited him. His creditors, set on by the malignity of Husk, had resolved to arrest him on his return; of this, when within only a few yards of his door, he was informed by a neighbour, who offered Skelton security for the night in a distant cottage. "I'll leave this place—I needs must leave it," cried the wretched father. "In London there is work for honest labour; if not, at least there 's room for desperate crime. We 'll beg our way to London," exclaimed Skelton, with bitterness, as yielding himself to the control of his neighbour, he proceeded to the cottage. Arrived there, he learnt from the daughter of his host, that Catherine was detained at the factory, as the girl understood, to wait on some London travellers and folks from Throstle Nest, who were merry-making in Master Husk's rooms. Skelton immediately determined to proceed there, fearing, as he declared, the worst from the brutality and known licentiousness of the overlooker. All persuasion to the contrary was in vain. "I may creep in unseen. I can then hide and watch; lend me your lanthorn, neighbour, it may serve me. My child waiting on drunkards—hearing their coarse talk—stared at by eyes, —it may be touched by hands, that—my sweet Catherine!"

And, turning a deaf ear to all remonstrance, Skelton quitted the cottage.

Catherine had followed Husk, to the factory, in the vain hope of obtaining from him a restitution of the tulips. This he had promised, but managed to delay the girl until the day had closed in, when several commercial travellers met to pass the evening in his rooms. With an assurance that, when they quitted, Catherine should receive back the flowers, the anxious, trembling girl was induced to remain. The revel ended, the visitors gone, Catherine awaited in Husk's apartment the performance of his promise. At this moment her father having entered the factory unperceived, stood before her. "Catherine, why are you here?" For the first time she trembled and turned pale at her parent's voice. "I will tell all; but, dear father, promise me not to be rash."

"Tell all!" cried Skelton; "tell"—at this instant his eye rested on some flowers in a vase: they were the tulips he had sent to Throstle Nest; his eye glared and his lip quivered as he gazed at them. Catherine, who had not observed them, earnestly entreated her father to be calm. "These flowers," cried Skelton, with mounting passion, "with these hands I gathered them! I know them as I know your eyes; how came they here? One word—on your soul, answer me,—were they seen to-day at Throstle Nest?"

"No."

"They were not seen, though they might have saved me from a gaol; they were not carried where I bade you; but here I find them in a villain's room, and find not them alone, but with them my child; that child who has deceived me, whose words I thought as honest as when first she spoke."

"But listen, father," passionately exclaimed Catherine, the tears streaming down her face; "but listen."

"Go on," cried Skelton, sinking in a chair, and making an effort to control his passion. Catherine briefly related the violence of Husk,—her fear of informing her father,—her hopes of regaining possession of the tulips.

"So, go home—no, not home, to our neighbour Laurin's; hence, I say!" and Skelton paced the room like a wild beast in its den.

"You will come with me, father?" asked Catherine.

"First let me see you from this roof; my curses light upon it! Go, I say." Catherine quitted the room, and Skelton retired to the window which commanded a view of the road, to watch her on her way. Whilst he waited, Husk entered the apartment where he had expected to meet Catherine. "Gone," he muttered, "no matter; for the scoundrel, her father, I have spoilt his sport to-day. To ruin him is the dearest wish of my soul," Skelton suddenly appeared at the side of Husk—"Her father thanks you for the wish!"

"Skelton! and I am alone," thought Husk; "alone, and without arms."

"Your face is white, Sir," cried Skelton, with determined calmness, taking a chair, and seating himself before the overseer; "Every joint shakes; your eyes are like glass. What ails you, man?"

"You do not mean to hurt me?" stammered Husk.

"Why should I? You have persecuted me, taken the bread from my mouth, given me anxious days and sleepless nights: yet why should I harm you; why should the worm bite the heel that mangles it? You do not go," cried Skelton, sternly, and the overseer again sank on the chair.

"You dare not?"—

"Do you think me such a worm, then? Dare not! Those flowers," and Skelton, with flaming eyes, and lips white with passion, pointed to the vase: "the devil is at my fingers, and would make me tear your heart out of your bosom. I gave them this morning to my daughter; how came they here?"

"How should I know; the room has been occupied by a young gentleman—a visitor. I can't account for girl's fancies; no doubt she gave them to him."

"Liar!" exclaimed Skelton, and his voice shrieked with

excess of scorn and passion. He seized the vase, and dashed it into atoms at the feet of the gasping tyrant. "You see these shivered pieces," continued Skelton; "dare but to say another word against my innocent child, and as surely as they lie before you, so surely shall you"—and he pointed with terrible significance to the window—"lie weltering in the valley beneath. The flowers! how came they here?"

"I—I brought them," sulkily answered Husk.

"And why did you so?"

"I thought the girl was idling her time. I—I—but go to the justice if you have anything to complain of. You can buy law, if you are rich enough to rear such tulips."

"Have heed, I do not take what I cannot buy. Nay, you are safe for me; though there's at my feet enough to make me mad. But no! I think of her, and I—I forgive you. Stop! you do not pass; I know your malice—you would set the law-dogs after me."

"No—on my word."

"The door has a lock; I'll trust to that in choice." So saying, Skelton quitted the room, locking the door, and leaving Husk to meditate on the shivered china scattered about him.

Skelton immediately sought to quit the factory. In his impatience, however, he had taken the wrong passage, and for a time groped in darkness for an outlet. At length, he thought of the lanthorn. Lighting the taper, he was about to retrace his way, when the sound of approaching footsteps made him pause. In an instant he crouched down behind a heap of cotton-yarn piled in a corner; but the light had been seen, and in two or three minutes Husk, who had been released, with others, were close at hand, bringing with them Mr. Ridley, the owner of the factory, and a Mr. Hartman, an American merchant, then on a visit at the establishment.

"John here," said Husk to Mr. Ridley, "saw a light glimmering among the works. 'Twas but last night—scarce two miles off—three ricks were fired."

"Search in every corner," cried Mr. Ridley; and by this time the party were arrived where Skelton lay concealed.

"The cotton heap, there—what's that?" cried Husk; and almost before the words were clearly uttered, Skelton stood discovered. "The villain—the incendiary!" was instantly exclaimed by all,—as Husk, with ill-concealed transport at the unhoped-for accident, displayed the lanthorn, with the yet warm wick of the taper.

"Wretched man," cried Mr. Ridley, "what could have urged you to so infamous an attempt?"

Skelton, overcome, stood aghast and horror-struck, vainly endeavouring to stammer out a word in defence. "He is confounded in his guilt," cried Ridley. "Tell me, have you any accomplices? Who urged you to fire the factory?"

"I came here for my child," said Skelton, recovering somewhat from his stupor; "she was detained—robbed by that villain. As I stand, with heaven to judge me, it is the truth!"

"I have sent, Sir," said Husk, "to have his house searched; there is, doubtless, further evidence. He has made a pretty hill here; I warrant me, there's a rare fire-train underneath."

"Against these proofs," urged Mr. Ridley, "denial but aggravates your guilt. Confess the truth."

"I have confessed—have told the truth—have told all; and see, see—I thank heaven for its mercies—look there!" And Skelton pointed to two sleeping children, discovered under the cotton, removed by the searchers.

"Children!" exclaimed every one.

"*My* children!" cried Skelton, with triumph. "I speak to fathers; could I have thought to fire that heap?"

"The man must be innocent," said Mr. Hartman.

"Say boys," cried Skelton to his children, "how came you here? Be not afraid, child; I am with you—no one here will hurt you. Tell me; how came you here?"

"We went home," said the eldest boy, "and there was nobody there; and we waited, and still nobody came. Then

brother and I, for fear we shouldn't wake in the morning, for there was no one to call us, crept up here; we were cold, and tired, and hungry; and we covered ourselves up, and went to sleep."

"You shake your head, master Husk," observed Mr. Ridley; "have you any other charge against this man?"

"What will your malice next invent?" demanded Skelton.

"Why should he owe you malice?" asked Mr. Ridley.

"I will tell you, Sir; would have told you before this, had you been here to listen. Three months since, a girl, she was an orphan child, for some fault—she had fallen asleep at her task—was struck, beaten with savage cruelty by your servant there. I prayed that he would stay his hand; again he struck: I was myself a father—it was wrong; but with one blow I laid him at my feet."

"And a blow well dealt, whoever struck it," cried Mr. Hartman.

"I was discharged," resumed Skelton; "my wife was then upon her dying bed—from that window you may see her grave; I sold to the last thing to buy her nourishment—the best advice—I contracted debts——"

"A fine tale," interrupted Husk; "and what made you run into useless debt?"

"Pride; but I counted on my future labour to pay all. 'Twas pride; I own it. My wife was born in comfort; she left a home of plenty, to lead with me a life of want. I could not see her laid in the earth in parish deals."

"Go on," said Mr. Ridley; "you say he persecuted you."

"Yesterday morning—I could get no work; I had tried at twenty things, and all had failed. I had reared some flowers; on my wife's death, I found the roots; she had brought them from her home—had them, though I knew not of it, since she was a girl. I gave the tulips to my daughter for the show at Throstle Nest. This man took them from her; she followed him—he detained her; set my creditors on me. I knew that

my child was here, waiting upon men, who—I had too often seen, though the world dreams little of it, the fate of youth and beauty in places such as this. I ran to take my child away; you found me here, Sir. I have told my story."

"And a true one, Master Ridley," cried Mr. Hartman, "or I am no judge of faces. Why, what flowers are those?" cried the stranger, taking a bunch of tulips from the hand of one of the men, who had picked them up in Husk's apartment.

"They are mine," cried Skelton; "the tulips I sent to Throstle Nest."

"They were your wife's?" asked Hartman. Skelton bowed assent. "Ridley," cried Hartman, in a suppressed tone of emotion and wonder, "these flowers — the roots were my father's; in such things he was most choice and curious — it was his passion. I'll swear to them."

"It is impossible," said Ridley: "may not others have had the like?"

"None but my sister; the rest were destroyed by a fire, that——"

Mr. Hartman was here interrupted by the arrival of the persons despatched by Husk to the house of Skelton: and Catherine, who had heard of her father's detention, was also with him.

"We have searched the house, Sir, and found nothing but this letter and this Bible," said one of the men, handing the articles to Mr. Ridley.

"The letter bears your signature, Hartman; and see this book——"

"Tell me," said Hartman, having glanced at the letter, "tell me—your wife's first name was——"

"Catherine Hartman," answered Skelton.

"This was my letter; this book, the gift of her mother; the flowers—all—all are proofs! Brother?—and yet Skelton was not her husband's name?"

"No," answered Skelton. "Reverses in fortune—bonds
one who deceived, ruined us—made me quit my birth-pla
and, to remain unknown, to change my name."

"And thus were frustrated all my hopes to find you. Wh
and Mr. Hartman caught Catherine in his arms—"had I
looked in her face, I had seen my sister! Blessings on
chance that led me here!"

"Mr. Husk," said Mr. Ridley, taking out his watch, "
now five; before eight you will have left the factory."

THE EPITAPH OF SIR HUGH EVANS.

"THERE's pippins and cheese to come!"

Such are the hopeful words of an old divine—of one Sir Hugh Evans,—a preacher distinguished in the latter part of the reign of Henry the Fourth, not so much for the ascetic asperity of his speech and bearing, as for a certain household wisdom that ran like threads of gold through his most familiar sentences, enhanced and recommended by a blithe look and a chirping voice; all of which excellent gifts made him the oracle and friend of the yeomen and good wives of Windsor. These inestimable qualities—to say nothing of his miraculous hand at bowls, and his marvellous sagacity as a brewer of sack—had, as we have already inferred, endeared him to his flock: and, living, and preaching, and gossiping in a neighbourhood of love and good fellowship, the parson grew old, his cheek mellowing to the last; when, in the year ——, he fell, like an over-ripe plum from the tree, into his grave—all the singing men and maids and little children of mournful Windsor following their teacher to his couch of earth, and chanting around it the hymn best loved by him when living.

In sooth, the funeral of the poor knight was most bravely attended. Six stout morrice-men carried the corpse from a cottage, the property of the burley, roystering Host of the Garter—a pretty rustic nook, near Datchet Meads, whither the worn-out parson had, for six months before his death, retired from the stir and bustle of Windsor,—and where, on a summer evening he might be seen seated in the porch, patiently hearing

little John Fenton lisp his Berkshire Latin,—the said John being the youngest grandson of old Master Page, and godchild of the grey-headed, big-bellied landlord of the Garter. Poor Sir Hugh had long been afflicted with a vexing asthma; and, though in his gayer times he would still brew sack for younger revellers, telling them rare tales of "poor dear Sir John and the Prince," he had, for seven years before his death, eschewed his former sports, and was never known to hear of a match of bowls that he did not shake his head and sigh,—and then, like a stout-hearted Christian as he was, soothe his discomfited spirit with the snatch of an old song. Doctor Caius had, on his death-bed, bequeathed to Sir Hugh an inestimable treasure: nothing less than a prescription—a very charm—to take away a winter cough: for three years had it been to Sir Hugh as the best gift of king Oberon; but, the fourth winter, the amulet cast its virtue, and from year to year the parson grew worse and worse,—when, in the sixty-eighth year of his age, on a bright May morning, in the arms of his gossip and friend, staid, sober Master Slender, with the Host of the Garter seated (for he was too fat to stand) in an arm-chair at the bedside, and Master Page and Master Ford at the foot, Sir Hugh Evans, knight and priest, passed into death, as into a sweet sound sleep. His wits had wandered somewhat during the night,—for he talked of "Herne the hunter," and "a boy in white;" and then he tried to chirrup a song,—and Masters Page and Ford smiled sadly in each other's face, as the dying man, chuckling as he carolled, trolled forth—

> "Pinch him and burn him, and turn him about,
> Till candles and starlight, and moonshine be out."

As the day advanced, the dying man became more calm; and at length, conscious of his state, he passed away at half-past nine in the morning, with a look of serenest happiness,—and "God be with you!" were the last words that fluttered from his lips.

The personal property of the dead parson was shared among his friends and servants. Master Slender inherited his "Book of Songs and Posies;" the Host of the Garter, the sword with which Sir Hugh had dared Doctor Caius to mortal combat; and all his wardrobe, consisting of two entire suits and four shirts, somewhat softened the grief of Francis Simple,—son of Simple, former retainer of Master Slender, and for three years body servant of dead Sir Hugh. A sum of two shillings and fourpence, miraculously discovered among the effects of the deceased, was faithfully distributed to the parish poor.

There was sadness in Windsor streets as the funeral procession moved slowly towards the church. Old men and women talked of the frolics of Sir Hugh; and though they said he had been in his day something of the merriest for a parson, yet more than one gossip declared it to be her belief that "worse men had been made bishops." A long train of friends and old acquaintance followed the body. First, came worthy Master Slender,—chief mourner. He was a bachelor, a little past his prime of life, with a sad and sober brow, and a belly inclining to portliness. The severe censors of Windsor had called him woman-hater, for that in his songs, and sometimes in his speech, he would bear too hardly on the frailties and fickleness of the delicate sex; for which unjust severity older people might, perchance, and they would have found some small apology. For, in truth, Master Slender was a man of softest heart; and though he studiously avoided the company of women, he was the friend of all the children of Datchet and Windsor. He always carried apples in his pocket for little John Fenton, youngest child of Anne Fenton, formerly Anne Page; and was once found sitting in Windsor Park, under the hunter's oak, with little John upon his knees,—Master Slender crying like a chidden maid. Of this enough. Let it now suffice to say, that Master Slender—for the Host was too heavy to walk—was chief mourner. Then followed Ford and his wife; next Mr. Page and his son William, — poor Mrs. Page being

dead two years at Christmas, from a cold caught with over-dancing, and then obstinately walking through the snow from her old gossip Ford's. Next, in the procession, were Master Fenton and his wife,—and then followed their eight children in couples; then Robin—now a prosperous vintner, once page to Sir John,—with Francis Simple; and then a score of little ones, to whom the poor dead parson would give teaching in reading and writing, — and, where he marked an apter wit among his free disciples, something of the Latin accidence. These were all that followed Sir Hugh Evans to his rest—for death had thinned the thick file of his old acquaintance. One was wanting, who would have added weight and dignity to the ceremony—who, had he not some few years before been called to fill the widest grave that was ever dug for flesh, would have cast from his broad and valiant face a lustrous sorrow on the manes of the dead churchman,—who would have wept tears, rich as wine, upon the coffin of his old friend,—for to him, in the convenient greatness of his heart, all men, from the prince of the blood to the nimming knave who stole the "handle of Mrs. Bridget's fan," were, by turns, friends and good fellows, —who, at the supper at the Garter (for the Host gave a most solemn feast, in celebration of the mournful event) would have moralised on death and mortal accidents, and, between his tankards, talked fine philosophy—true divinity; would have caroused to the memory of the dead in the most religious spirit of sack, and have sent round whole flagons of surest consolation. Alas! this great, this seeming invincible spirit, this mighty wit, with jests all but rich enough to laugh Death from his purpose—to put him civilly aside with a quip, bidding him to pass on and strike at leaner bosoms,—he himself, though with "three fingers on the ribs," had been hit; and he, who seemed made to live for ever, an embodied principle of fleshly enjoyment—he, the great Sir John,—

"He was dead, and nailed in his chest!"

Others, too, passed away with their great dominator, were

wanting at the ceremonial. Where was he, with nose enshrining jests richer to us than rubies? True, liberal, yet most unfortunate spirit, hapless Bardolph! where, when Sir Hugh was laid upon the lap of his mother earth, oh! where wert thou? Where was that glorious feature that, had the burying been at the dead time of night, would have outshone the torches? Where was that all rich—all lovely nose? Alack! it may be in the maws of French falcons; its luckless owner throttled on the plains of Agincourt for almost the smallest theft—hung up by fellest order of the Fifth Henry—of his old boon companion, his brother robber on the field of Gadshill. And could Harry march from the plain with laurel on his brow, and leave the comrade of his youth—his fellow footpad—with neck mortally cut "with edge of penny cord?" Should such a chaplet have been twined with such hemp? The death of Bardolph is a blot—a foul, foul blot on the 'scutcheon of Agincourt! Let us however pass the ingratitude and tyranny of kings, to dwell wholly upon the burial of Sir Hugh.

Who shall say that all the spirits with whom the parson was wont to recreate himself,—to counsel, to quarrel,—who shall say that they did not all mingle in the procession, all once again pass through the streets of ancient Windsor? The broad shadow of Sir John, arm-in-arm with the spirit of Mrs. Page—Bardolph and Nym, descended from their gibbets, new from the plains of France, to make melancholy holiday in Berkshire,—learned Doctor Caius, babbling Quickly, and Pistol, her broken, war-worn husband, kicked down the tavern stairs, where in his old days he served as drawer, and killed,—and Shallow, immortal Shallow, his lean ghost fluttering with a sense of office,—who shall say that all these did not crowd about the coffin of good Sir Hugh, and, as he was laid in the grave, give him a smiling welcome to his everlasting habitation? Let us not, in this day of light, be charged with superstition, if in these pages—perpetual as adamant—we register our belief, a belief mingling in our very blood, that all these

illustrious ghosts followed, and, with their dim majesty, ennobled the procession, — albeit, to the eyes of the uninitiate, none but the living did service to the dead.

Sir Hugh Evans was laid by the side of his old friend and old antagonist, Doctor Caius; and, for many years, there was a story among the good wives of Windsor, that the fairies, once a-year, danced round the grave of Sir Hugh, the turf upon it growing as bright as emeralds; and, in a hawthorn bush, but a few paces from the spot, "melodious birds" did, at certain seasons, "sing madrigals."

We have now to speak of the Epitaph of the good Sir Hugh. More than four hundred years have passed away since the mortal part of that most worthy piece of Welsh divinity was consigned to dust. It may be a lesson to ambition to learn, that the exact spot where he was buried cannot, at the present time, be verified: the ablest antiquarians are at odds about it. Proud, however, — and, we trust, not unseemly so,—are we, to be the means of publishing to the world the epitaph of Sir Hugh, copied from his tombstone, in the possession of a gentleman in Berkshire, who has resisted our most earnest supplications that he would suffer us to make known his name. This favour he has resolutely refused; but has, in the most handsome manner, presented us with the use of the tombstone, together with a most voluminous, and no less satisfactory, account of its genuineness. Happy should we have been, could we have found room for the history of the relic at full. Leaving it, however, for the archives of the Antiquarian Society, we must content ourselves with stating, that the document fully proves that the tombstone was erected from the private munificence of Master Slender; and that the pithy and most touching epitaph inscribed upon it, was selected by his happy taste, as combining all the excellences of an epitaph in the fewest words —these words having the further recommendation of being uttered, on a memorable occasion, by the deceased himself. The words were repeated to Master Slender, by his servant

Simple, despatched, on a certain day, by Sir Hugh with a letter touching the wooing of Anne Page. After long pondering, reviewing every circumstance of his ancient friendship with the dead Sir Hugh,—seated, one sunny afternoon on the bench outside the Garter, the words came jump again into the mind of Slender; and quickly rising and emptying his tankard, he marched like a man resolved to the stone-cutter, and—for he cared not for Latin—bade the workman cut on the stone (the inscription, considering its age, is in an extraordinary state of preservation) the words that follow:—

HUGH EVANS,

KNIGHT AND PRIESTE,

Dyed atte Datchette,

MAY—ANNO DOMI 14—

AGED 68.

"THERE'S PIPPINS AND CHEESE—TO COME."

To our mind, there never was a more felicitous epitaph than this of the poor Welsh Parson. How simply, yet how beautifully, does it shadow forth the fruitfulness of the future! How delicate, and yet how sufficing, its note of promise!—

"THERE'S PIPPINS AND CHEESE—TO COME."

Were we authorised to preach, we feel that we could make a most seemly, yea, a most reverent sermon, from this little text. Pippins! Does not the word, upon a tombstone, conjure up thoughts of Hesperian gardens—of immortal trees, laden with golden fruit; with delicious produce, the growth of a soil where not one useless weed takes root, where no baneful snake rustles among the grass, where no blight descends, no canker withers? Where we may pluck from the consenting boughs, and eat, and eat—and never, as in earthly things, find a worm at the core, a rottenness at the heart, where outside beauty tempted us to taste? "There's pippins *to come!*" The evil

and misery gathered with the apple of death will be destroyed —forgotten—by the ambrosial fruit to be plucked for ever in immortal orchards!

"THERE'S PIPPINS AND CHEESE—TO COME!"

What a picture of plenty in its most beneficent aspect—what a prospect of pastoral abundance!

Think of it, ye oppressed of the earth! Ye, who are bowed and pinched by want—ye, who are scourged by the hands of persecution—ye, crushed with misery—ye, doomed to the bitterness of broken faith; take this consolation to your wearied souls—apply this balsam to your bruised hearts—that, though all earth be to you as barren as the sands—

"THERE'S PIPPINS AND CHEESE—TO COME!"

THE END.

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